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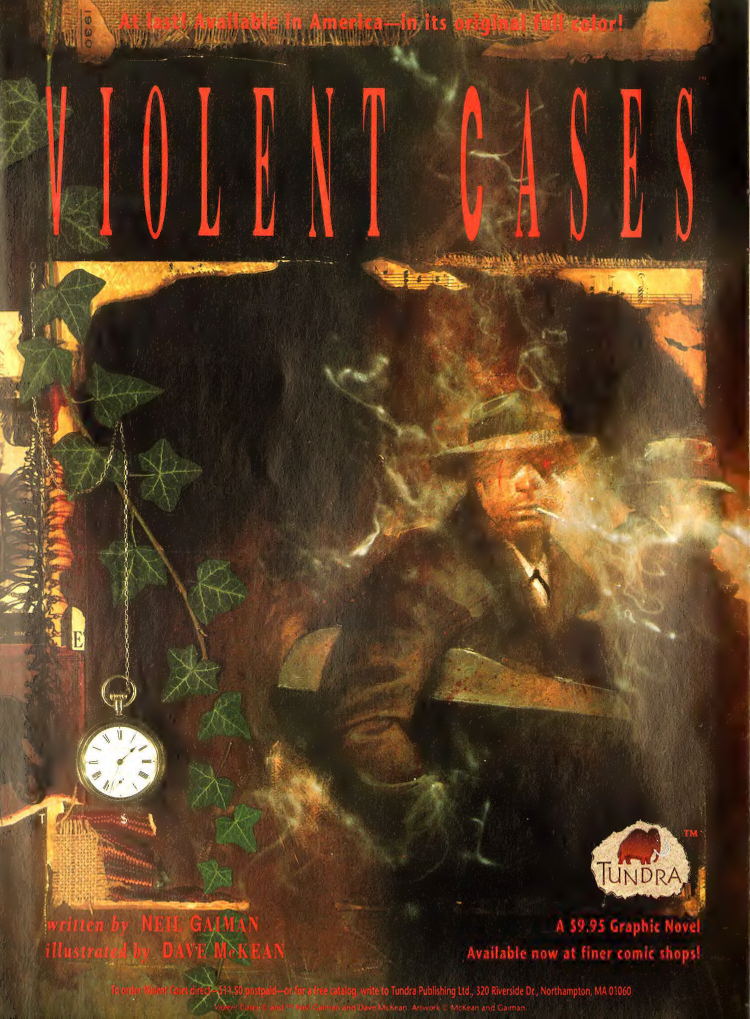

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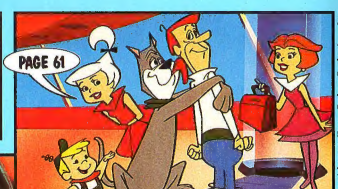

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COMICS SCENE RETURNS as **Dan Jurgens** takes a look at the Man of Steel and **Prince Valiant** gets animated. It's all in **COMICS SCENE #22, on sale September 23, 1991.**

WORD BALLOONS

Roads Not Taken

Ever since I've been reading comics, it's been a matter of endless speculation. Just what would have happened...just how would things have been different...what might have changed...*what if*—

And then, you fill in the blank with a question something like, "What if Bozo the Clown had run for president?"

Wait just one minute. He *did*.

Usually, though, those questions concern something far less funny to most of us: What if Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster *never* met? What if there had been no *Amazing Fantasy* #15? What if Fredric Wertham was *right*?

Timeline theory proposes, if one (or more) pivotal events are altered, the world will change. Sometimes for the better, sometimes not.

As a science fiction and a comics fan, I've always been a sucker for alternate worlds, the basis for countless time travelogues and innumerable parallel universe yarns. Maybe it's because I find contemplating the possibilities endlessly interesting/amusing/terrifying. Maybe it's because all this makes for good fiction. But most probably it's personal—I've often pondered the choices I've made (or those made for me), the roads not taken in my life.

Yes, I *do* believe that there are pivotal events in everyone's lives—some major, some minor—where the right (or wrong) words, actions, decisions or acts of God can alter it all. You may even recognize the moment as it's happening to you—particularly if it involves such major passages as weddings, funerals, births. Most often, though, it's only in today's cold grey light that the actual events and their later importance are truly realized and you mouth silently to yourself, "*If I only...*"

Terminally imaginative, I've pinpointed at least a dozen such moments in my past; three I find especially haunting thanks to the possible consequences. What if 20 years ago, an earthquake *hadn't* destroyed the hospital where my dad worked? Having never relocated with the family to the East Coast, I would still be living in California, pursuing another line of work.

Or what if 15 years ago, I *had* decided to attend a college-sponsored term spent in London, England? Well, there's a good chance I'd be married to someone who did go, a lovely woman with dark hair. Maybe not.

And what if just a decade ago, while on the *Swamp Thing* set, a STARLOG PRESS editor *hadn't* told me about a brand new magazine called COMICS SCENE? That's a future I'm sure of—because as an editor employed elsewhere, I never would have begun freelancing for the first COMICS SCENE, which led to a STARLOG staff position and eventually, this job. Someone else more handsome (and inevitably, shorter) would be filling this space with word balloons.

Those are three alternate timelines among many—the kind of options often explored in DC's imaginary stories of the past and Marvel's more recent *What If* forays. Now (see page 19), they're joined by a new ongoing DC imprint to chart the Elseworlds of (at first) Batman's alternate egos.

In these realms of what may be, creators are free of the burdens of continuity, the constraints of licensing and the needs of publishing. Characters can get married off! They can easily change costumes! And since there never has to be a second issue, they can die! Boy, can they die!

Case in point: *What If* Vol. 2 #25, written by Jim Valentino. "What if the Marvel Superheroes had lost Atlantis Attacks?" Well, I never got around to reading those themed 1990 Marvel Annuals, so I judged this story not as an alternate take on a previously published storyline but on its own merits as a riveting tale of unexpected developments. Prince Namor dies on page 5. The Thing gets eaten on page 6. Dr. Strange burns to death on page 7. And on page 8? The Beast, the Wasp and Dr. Henry Pym *all* die. Hey, cancel their comics, call off those toy deals, this is a story where *anything* could happen.

Fortunately, though, *What If* is only fiction—not reality, not the real Marvel Universe. (And no, *I* won't be the one to announce that almost all comics, Harvey Pekar excepted, *are* fiction.)

Not a dream, not a hoax, they're imaginary stories, tales that will never, ever come true, as unlikely as Superman actually proposing to Lois Lane...

On second thought...

—David McDonnell/Editor

LETTERING

Personal replies are impossible. Other fans & advertisers may contact readers whose letters are printed here. To **avoid** this, mark your letter "Please Withhold My Address." Otherwise, we retain the option to publish it. Write:
COMICS SCENE
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...I just received COMICS SCENE #20 and I think Tom Weaver's article on me was just great. Dan Scapperotti's article on the history of Rocket Man and Commando Cody was also right on the money and it brought back a lot of memories of 40 years ago. (My God, 40 years ago—I didn't think I was ever that young!)

Once again my thanks to you for the time and interest in Commando Cody. Tom Weaver should feel proud of a truly well-written article and story. I know I do.

George Wallace
Address Withheld

...Having COMICS SCENE publish two posters on each side of a page is a disadvantage, for the reader now must buy two SPECTACULARs to hang up all of the posters on the wall. Second, on the increase of comic books, there seems to be an upped ante of the prices, but not much improvement in quality. It's also bad to see all of the comic-book rip-offs today. The gimmicks somewhat started with *Hush Hush Wars II* (I'm substituting the real name to protect the unninocent, and not to violate copyright laws). The reader, assuming he or she wanted to keep up with the story, had to collect both the limited series, and all of the frantic crossovers that went with them. That's when most buttoned-up, coffeed-out executives found out that readers could be taken advantage of.

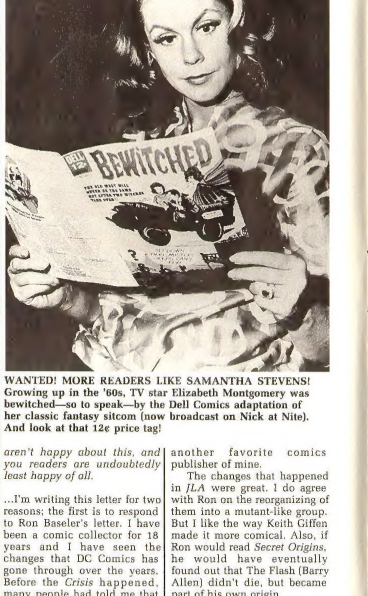
Today, it's gone to polybagged, collectors-card, glow-in-the-dark, appealing-to-naive-dudes comics. When that famous sloppy artist came out with a new bug comic, they milked the market more with autographed polybagged stuff. Now, they put collectors cards in one issue, making five variations of the same comic, so you have to collect them all to be worth something (actually, you have to buy 10 issues: Five opened, five unopened). Of course, you have to collect a series of five cards (one per issue) just to have them wasted away to get one special card.

I had this idea of comics reverting to a magazine format (it has been done) to put more into it, and maybe at a better rate. But, if all comics did that, they really wouldn't be comics anymore (and the owners of an eternal supply of modern polybags would not be so happy). I don't collect comics that cost more than $2 (even if I could afford them) mostly because they're not worth it. Why pay $3 for a lousy printed black-and-white comic with sloppy artwork? They could price it much less. Are those gimmicks more for the readers' benefit or the company's?

You should count yourself lucky, for America is a land of greed (ask anybody). How can comics come of age when they actually have 900-number contests to win outdated prizes? When will comics put back what readers put into them? COMICS SCENE is OK though, for it has color, interesting articles and it's only four-fif...$4.50??? You snuck in a price hike?!?! I could get more color from *Rolling Stone*!!! Maybe you could have a price decrease if you had a major 900 number contest where readers could win that *Joanie Loves Chachi* poster book, and the second prize would be *Superman III, Staying Alive* movie mags and...

Shaw Izikson
Address Withheld

It's a sweeping generalization to say this, but editors, writers, artists and other creators (of comics, magazines like this one and books) are never happy with price increases. Price increases are made by publishers—usually with some hesitation—and normally due to the ever-increasing costs of paper, ink, color separations and, most of all, printing. We aren't happy about this, and you readers are undoubtedly least happy of all.



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WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE SAMANTHA STEVENS! Growing up in the '60s, TV star Elizabeth Montgomery was bewitched—so to speak—by the Dell Comics adaptation of her classic fantasy sitcom (now broadcast on Nick at Nite). And look at that 12¢ price tag!

...I'm writing this letter for two reasons: the first is to respond to Ron Baseler's letter. I have been a comic collector for 18 years and I have seen the changes that DC Comics has gone through over the years. Before the *Crisis* happened, many people had told me that there were too many things happening and too many characters to keep track of. But neither before the *Crisis* nor after it, did I ever stop reading comics. In fact, I started reading more of DC's titles because they were becoming more realistic than they were before the *Crisis*. They became more of a challenge to Marvel Comics, another favorite comics publisher of mine.

The changes that happened in *JLA* were great. I do agree with Ron on the reorganizing of them into a mutant-like group. But I like the way Keith Giffen made it more comical. Also, if Ron would read *Secret Origins*, he would have eventually found out that The Flash (Barry Allen) didn't die, but became part of his own origin.

Speaking of Barry Allen, I liked the way that Bilson and De Meo did *The Flash* series. I have watched this year's shows every week and they are getting better and better. I like the way they have done three of the Rogue's Gallery villains so far. Also, I can't wait for *Rocketeer*. Everything I have read on it in both COMICS

SCENE and STARLOG suggests that this movie is going to be great. Just like *Batman* (hopefully).

Shawn Phillips
909 Mercer Avenue
Ojai, CA 93023

...First of all, I really enjoy your publication. When the original COMICS SCENE came to an end, I was terribly disappointed; it was, in my opinion, the first magazine to make comic book reading/collecting seem like a legitimate, accepted hobby. The new series took me somewhat by surprise. I missed the first issue, but I've enjoyed every issue since #2. Keep up the excellent reporting!

Secondly, I would like to respond to Ron Baseler's letter in #19, which was a response to the editorial in #17. Apparently, Mr. Baseler started collecting comics at the same time I did, around 1972. Older fans probably cringe at the thought of some of the comics that were being published at that time, but for me, those were some pretty special books. I still remember being fascinated at the concept of multiple Earths! Two Supermen! Two Flashes! An adult Robin! It was great! *Justice League of America*, *Flash* and *Teen Titans* were my three favorite books, and, through the last several years, I've stayed with most of my DC heroes. However, like with Baseler, much of the fun of comics reading is gone for me.

Now, the *Legion of Super-Heroes* is virtually unrecognizable. The *Justice League* has adopted a *Three's Company* mentality. And I can't even begin to describe what I think of the current *Doom Patrol*.

There are a few bright spots in the DC Universe. Marv Wolfman and Tom Grummett's *New Titans* is still basically the original *Teen Titans*, minus the hip slang. *Wonder Woman* inspires more wonder than she ever has, and I find all three *Superman* titles more interesting than ever before, especially Jerry Ordway's homage to Jack Kirby's *Jimmy Olsen* series. Yeah, a few bright spots.

Maybe the new Impact Universe will really make things shine for those of us who are tired of psychotic vigilantes, ninjas and mutants.

Thomas Moudry
1306 Bradyville Road L-101
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

...Ho-hum. Another issue of COMICS SCENE (#19), another one of Bob Miller's fulsome articles about *Tiny Toon Adventures*. Not that *TTA* doesn't deserve at least *some* of the attention it has received, but as an unabashed fan of the Disney TV series, I can't help but compare this magazine's constant Toon-gushing with the deafening silence with which it has greeted recent TV and TV-related Disney projects. *Tale Spin*, which battled *TTA* on even terms in many major markets from day one, has received nary a peep, nor did *DuckTales the Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp* when it appeared last summer. As for *DuckTales*, merely the best animated series of all time (and the reason why *TTA* was created in the first place), the article by David Hutchison back in #2 was appreciated, but contained so many ghastly errors that it might as well have never been written. It would seem that your (understandable) predilection for the old Warners shorts has colored your approach to *Tiny Toons* in a big way.

I enjoy *Tiny Toons* quite a lot. Most of the first season's half-hour episodes ranged from good to excellent, especially the earlier ones. The animation, particularly in the Rich Arons-directed episodes, certainly cannot be faulted. The satirical angle is refreshing and often (as in the "Who Bopped Bugs Bunny" "reprise" of the '58 cartoon-Oscar race) remarkably subtle, requiring a confirmed Toonatic to dope out all the in-jokes and references. The voice-work is probably the best thing about the show. If Tress MacNeille isn't the next Jane Foray, she's as strong a candidate as any. It would be worth tuning in to the show just to listen to the byplay between MacNeille, Charlie Adler and Joe Alaskey as Babs, Buster and Plucky.

But ranged against these undeniable positives are a bushel basket full of negatives: far, *far* too much "taking" and hysteria just for the sake of "taking" and hysteria; too many off-putting characters (Shirley, Sweetie Bird, Montana Max, Dizzy Devil, and, above all, the awful Elmyra); too much repetition of stock Warners plots (what exactly is *new* about Furball, Calamity and Fifi La Fume?); a frequently irritating "PC" tone that detracts from the humor (I can do without another Toxic Revenger vs. "greedy capitalist Monty" short); an all-too-frequent streak of cruelty; and a wild inconsistency in the quality of the short episodes. Also, I think that *TTA*'s "revolution" in TV animation quality is pure hogwash. It was Disney that pulled TV animation out of the Slough of Despond in the mid-80s with such series as *DuckTales* and *Gummi Bears*. The jump from *Pound Puppies*, et al., to *DuckTales* was far, far bigger than any difference between the Disney series and *TTA* as far as animation quality goes.

TTA certainly would have to rank in the Top Ten of animated series, but any objective observer would have to rank it behind *DuckTales* and *Tale Spin*. The characters in these series are capable of a far greater range of emotions, and the storylines run the gamut from "straight" adventure to the sort of zany humor *TTA* exemplifies. It's a shame that COMICS SCENE hasn't seen fit to give them the sort of attention they deserve.

Christopher E. Barat
Richmond, VA

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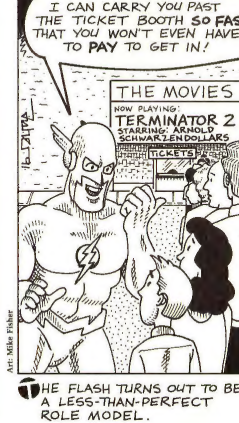
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Will the people numbered 400 through 550 please get in line. Jim Lee will only be signing three books per person," announces the overhead speaker at a warehouse disguised as a Los Angeles comic book convention. The crowd groans as fans pack away stacks and stacks of *The Punisher War Journal*, *Alpha Flight* and, of course, *The Uncanny X-Men*. Between Lee and fellow attendees Mike Zeck, Whilce Portacio, Erik Larsen and Scott Williams, crowd control is needed to prevent chaos. Excitement over the new *X-Men* book is reaching an all-time high.

Asked if he had expected all of this anticipation when he got into comics, Lee replies jokingly, "Oh yeah. I knew that *X-Men* would be doing this well. Just kidding! It's amazing, and I'm really excited. Sales figures on books like this just keep getting bigger. They've been building on each prior success ever since *The Man of Steel* and *Legends of the Dark Knight*. And I'm sure that Marvel wants to repeat the success they had on Todd McFarlane's *Spider-Man* with *X-Force* and *X-Men*."

Rob Liefeld's *X-Force* is going back to press after a 3.8 million copy initial run. Figures on *X-Men* are projected

By HANK KANALZ

MUTANT ARTIST

Jim Lee's latest gambit involves more than just drawing "X-Men."

The plotter/artist will introduce a new villain whose origin ties in with Captain America and Wolverine.

between four and seven million, setting new records for the comic-book industry. Not bad for a psychology graduate from Princeton who decided not to go to medical school.

"Four more years of school, followed by four more years in indentured slavery as an intern, was *not* for me," he says. Doing sample pages, and then working his way up through various Marvel books, took hard work, perseverance, but not much time.

Lee works out of Homage Studios in San Diego, where he draws alongside fellow X-artists Whilce Portacio and Scott Williams. "The name was sort of an inside joke at first. We would see something that was a flagrant swipe, and we would say, 'No, no, he's paying homage [to the artist he swiped from].' The studio name is supposed to be ironic, but it may come out as sounding pretentious. It's not supposed to, though."

The artist's work is often compared to that of Portacio's, and he admits there are similarities. "Superficially, I would say we use similar lines and rendering. It's hard not to be influenced when you work four feet apart! Our storytelling is very different; Whilce has a notch up on me there. His is very cinematic with a strong narrative behind it, whereas I tend to pull the camera back with lots of medium shots."

Lee feels a strength in his work is the detail that he puts into it. "I don't mind drawing *every* button or switch on a panel, but sometimes, I feel my artwork looks too cluttered."

Plotter/artist Jim Lee is glad *X-Men* #1 will be the biggest-selling issue in comics history, "at least, until *next* summer."

Marvel had approached Jim Lee with the idea of starting a new book before, although he felt the time wasn't right until now. "Whenever you do spin-offs, you tend to spread your creative teams thinner. When the right people came around, they decided to do the new book."

Not only did Marvel need to find just the right team for *X-Men*, they had to shuffle around talent for several other X-books. Replaced by artist Larry Strohman on *X-Factor*, Portacio takes over Lee's position as penciller on *The Uncanny X-Men*. *X-Factor* will be written by Peter David (CS SPECTACULAR #5), while Portacio and Lee will also plot the two *X-Men* books. Chris Claremont (CS #17) will script *X-Men* until the third issue, and *Uncanny X-Men* until #281. After that, John Byrne takes over scripting both *X-Men* books.

"We're excited about that," claims Lee. "Longtime fans are coming back to the book to see what's happening. John has consistently put out good work, so it's just a matter of him getting used to the characters again."

Despite the addition of Byrne to the titles, Lee admits a certain presence will be missing. After all, Claremont had been writing the X-Men characters for about 16 years. "It was an amicable parting. Chris and I still talk and get along as we did."

Now that Lee is plotting his own book, he wants to pace the story a little differently. "Chris tends to pack a lot of action into his stories," he notes. "I would like to open it up a little bit, do more challenging artistic shots and bigger action pages. Also, not to be derogatory of *The Uncanny X-Men*, I would like to tighten the stories just a little. There were so many plotlines running in different directions with no end in sight. The storylines we've set up for *X-Men* all have a conclusion within five or six issues."

Since *X-Men* is the latest of four regular X-series currently on the market, some critics believe there are too many mutant titles. "I don't see how there can be too many when they sell this well and get this kind of response from fans," Lee replies. "I can see the independent publishers saying that, because it takes away from their sales. But, if they had a book or concept that sold as well, they would put out as many books, too. There are four Spidey and Superman books, so I don't see how this is any different."

The Uncanny X-Men has been one of the most popular books over the last decade. Lee attributes this success to the book's concept. "They're outcasts from society, yet they strive to protect the very same people who hate them for what they are. It gets to the whole root of racism and intolerance in our society. Those are the underlying themes in each issue that readers identify with and respond to.

"I would like to say the [book's] popularity is because of me! For a while, the mutant books were sagging. I think all of the X-books are on a roll right now, and they feed off of each other. It has been a combination of Rob on *X-Force*, Whilce on *X-Factor* and Marc Silvestri on *Wolverine*. I would like to think that we're doing different and exciting stories."

Lee's *X-Men* will be led by Cyclops, and features Wolverine, Rogue, Gambit, Beast and Psylocke. "We call mine the blue team, while Whilce's is the gold team. He's stuck with all the feeble characters. No, I'm just kidding!"

After the current Magneto storyline, the plotter/artist plans on introducing a new villain, Omega Red, whose past and origin ties in with Wolverine and Captain America. "He's the Soviets' equivalent of Captain America, but not in the same way as the Red Guardian," Lee explains. "Omega Red is the result of the '60s race to create the ultimate fighting machine."

According to Lee, Omega Red could be compared to Weapon X. "Well, I always thought that Weapon

X was built upon Project Rebirth. The Soviets were working on their own project, but they lacked the technology and funds to see it through. One of Omega Red's powers is that he's sort of a walking plague. He absorbs life energy and causes death to the people around him. He brought himself close to death, so the facility quick-froze him and put him in storage. Now, with the political turbulence and restructure in the Soviet Union, he's discovered at a forgotten site."

Omega Red is then taken and sold to the Japanese, who believe it's cheaper to buy their fighting machines than to develop some. "The problem with Omega Red is that he has no healing factor to counteract his killing factor," Lee notes, adding that the people who buy Omega Red also go after Wolverine to take or duplicate his mutant healing factor. "Wolverine will sort of recognize elements of himself in Omega Red, and therein lies the character's mystery.

"You'll also see some people from Barry Windsor-Smith's 'Weapon X' story," Lee continues. "I felt that story ended rather nebulously, so I'm making a natural progression from it. And," he hints, "there's a greater reason why all this is happening."

After that storyline, Lee plans to focus on Gambit. "We're going to the bayous to explore the mystery of Gambit. People seem to really like him, even though there's a lot we haven't even touched on. We'll be exploring where he came from, his past, and why he hooked up with the X-

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Lee plans to stay with *X-Men* well beyond the Magneto storyline. "I'm concerned with the book's future."

"The X-Men think [Gambit's] a good guy," notes Lee, "yet they have every reason not to trust him."

Lee credits the *X-Men* books' success to their past, present and future creative teams. Oh, and the mutants helped, too.

All X-Men Art: Jim Lee/Scott Williams

Men. The X-Men won't know whose side he's on, even though readers will know—or *think* they know. The X-Men think he's a good guy, yet they have every reason not to trust him.

"We'll also meet a woman he was supposed to marry but walked out on—in fact, there are many women in his life that he has done that to! Gambit is a member of a clan of mutants in the bayou."

This Gambit storyline will ultimately tie in with a bigger scenario involving the Upstarts, a group of hotheaded mutants who try to take over the mutant power structure. All of these storylines tie in to a grand scheme which leads to a crossover with *The Uncanny X-Men*. "Although each book will be complete and understandable, it would behoove the reader to pick up both titles. Some hints will be dropped in one book that affect the other," Lee says.

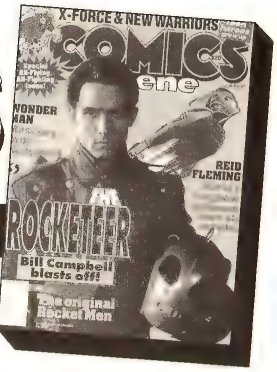
And what else does Jim Lee have in store for the future? "Nothing," he laughs. "I plan on staying on *X-Men* for a long time. Right now, I'm concerned with the book's future. Sales for the first one are great, that's a given. Now, I have the challenge of keeping sales good for the rest of the run. Eventually, I would like to do my own characters, so people know what I like to see, as far as good comic book stories go. As it is now, I have enough time to do about 30 extra pages a year outside of *X-Men*."

With the added responsibilities of plotting the title, Lee finds it challenging enough to keep on his deadlines. As far as scripting goes, he feels more comfortable with someone else doing it for the moment. "At this point, I would only want to script characters I create, because I know what they're supposed to sound like."

With all the attention that Marvel is giving *X-Men*, Jim Lee is becoming better known than ever. "I cringe when I see ads like 'Jim Lee's *X-Men*.' It's as much mine as it is Chris' or Scott's, and, for that matter, the letterer and colorist. It's definitely a team effort, but I guess it's easier to focus on *one* person."

And since comics are a visual medium, Jim Lee's name gets pushed the hardest. "Yeah, I hear that with all the marketing tricks, this will be the biggest book in history—at least, until *next* summer."

ON THE COMICS scene



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The Flaming Carrot joins the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles for a new flavor of superhero stew.

Flying canine corpses! Ferocious mail-order brides from Borneo! Alien swingers from outer space! No, it's not a collection of *National Enquirer* headlines, just business as usual in the weird, surreal world of *Flaming Carrot*, a comic book so strange, it makes Alan Moore's *Watchmen* look like *Super Friends*.

In the Carrot's black-and-white adventures, one encounters such characters as doddering Uncle Billy (who may or may not be George Bailey's uncle from *It's a Wonderful Life*), an unstoppable army of empty boots (they saved and cloned Hitler's boots) and the Mystery Men (a blue-collar Justice League with heroes like the Shoveler).

By PAT JANKIEWICZ

The Carrot prepares to demonstrate his gift for diplomacy to some visiting aliens.

The Carrot himself is an oddity. Perpetually masked as a flaming vegetable, he spends his time aimlessly wandering neighborhoods, hanging out at discos and picking up girls. He relaxes by blowing on his bubble pipe, is capable of converting a frozen pizza into a high-powered gun and shouts "Uh!" when surprised. ("*Uh* is the sound a baby makes," his creator points out.)

"It's a lot of fun writing comics because you can do *whatever* you want," says *Carrot* writer/artist Bob Burden, who previously discussed his work in CS#2. "I like to experiment with my imagination and grab things out of thin air. The book isn't a parody; it's a genre unto itself. Flaming Carrot is very sane, but exists in a Zen state of stupidity. He does this in order to outfox his enemies. If he can't outfox 'em, he'll outfool 'em—he's a fool for weirdness!"

Burden, a self-assured, slyly funny man who resembles a college professor gone astray, describes his odd creation as "a monstrosity roaming the face of the Earth. At first glance, he looks like a superhero, but he's really an obscene, William S. Burroughs-type thing. It was just one of many wacky ideas I came up with. It made no sense to such an extent that there was an advantage to doing it, because you had no precognition to what it was supposed to be like.

"Flaming Carrot is a spirit of America—the have-fun, rambunctious frontier spirit that's quickly disappearing," Burden declares. "It's something I could goof around with and not worry about destroying some character who's so far gone to start with. That's what's happening now with many really obscure characters. Animal Man, for instance. If they say, 'We don't care about this character. Do whatever you want with it,' it comes out great. But when they give Superman to somebody, they say, 'You must be really *careful* with this character,' and it comes out really stiff, constipated and unlively."

IT'S EARTH'S FIRST CONTACT WITH THESE ALIENS... AND ALL FLAMING CARROT CAN COME UP WITH IS TO *ANNIHILATE, INCINERATE* AND *DESTROY* THEM ?!!
HEY... I'M NO JACK KENNEDY!
KEROSENE

Photo: Dan Jankiewicz

Burden and his Carrot are currently embarking on what may be their strangest adventure: Teaming up with the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. "We just decided to do it and went ahead and did it," Burden says simply, before realizing how easy that sounds. "Quite a good answer for a reader out there saying, 'Gee, I want to tie in with the Turtles too. I'm gonna do it like Bob did!' I've actually been talking with the Turtles management about this since 1984. This was a big deal, involving legal documents, percentages and everything."

The decision to team the Renaissance reptiles with the protector of Palookaville "goes back to when we were both starting out with a regular comic book and said, 'Let's do this,' "

***Flaming Carrot* creator Bob Burden enjoys writing comics. "You can do *whatever* you want."**

WHY DO YOU WEAR FLIPPERS?
IN CASE I HAVE TO SWIM.
WHY DO YOU HAVE THAT CARROT ON YOUR HEAD?
MY COSTUME?... STRIKE FEAR INTO CRIMINALS! CONFUSE THEM... WHY?
WHY?
HEY, YOU ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS FOR SOMEONE WHO LOOKS STRANGE ENOUGH TO BE FROM MARS! I MEAN, DO I ASK YOU WHY YOU'RE *GREEN* AND HAVE *THREE FINGERS*? DO I HAH? DO I?

Raphael takes his questions about adulthood to a less-than-eager-to-answer Flaming Carrot.

Flaming Carrot Characters & Art Copyright 1990, 1991 Bob Burden

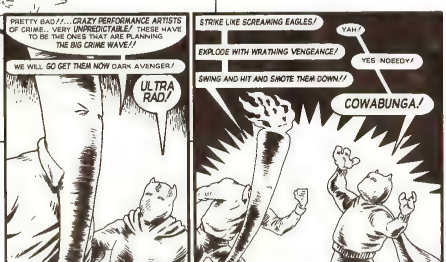
If Burden's hero can't outfox his opponents, "he'll outfool 'em—he's a fool for weirdness!"

Burden explains. "It was first announced in '85 or '86 for the back of one of the *Turtle* books, but we didn't get rolling on it—seriously talking about it—until the San Diego Comic Con in '89."

That super-power summit consisted of Burden, "Kevin [Eastman] and Pete [Laird, creators of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles] and Jim Crandall. Jim had a lot of input on it." The teaming seemed appropriate "because you have kind of a stylistic compatibility between the two books."

The Flaming Carrot and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles will join forces twice this year, with only one hero in a half-shell appearing in the first issue. "Basically, I came up with the storyline just to cut one of the characters from the pack so I *wouldn't* have to draw all four Turtles!" Burden confesses with a laugh. "A great deal of engineering goes into comics!

"I chose Raphael as the focus character because he's more introspective. He was a good choice since he fit the story I wanted to do. It starts with Raphael reading books on philosophy and culture and wondering, 'What is an adult? What


PRETTY BAD//... CRAZY PERFORMANCE ARTISTS OF CRIME... VERY UNPREDICTABLE/ THESE HAVE TO BE THE ONES THAT ARE PLANNING THE BIG CRIME WAVE//
WE WILL GO GET THEM NOW DARK AVENGER!
ULTRA RAD!
STRIKE LIKE SCREAMING EAGLES/
YAH!
EXPLODE WITH WRATHING VENGEANCE/
YES INDEEDY!
SWING AND HIT AND SMOTE THEM DOWN//
COWABUNGA!

All Flaming Carrot Art: Bob Burden

The Carrot turns Raphael into a Mystery Man, er, Mystery *Turtle*.

makes a person an adult as opposed to an adolescent?' He's curious about adults, so he goes out to observe them in their own habitat."

Publication puts an end to months of labor for the artist. "Creatively, 1990 was a bad year for me," he sighs. "I was kind of numb. I suddenly had a responsibility to do these two Turtle stories, hundreds of pages, and I had to make an about-turn right in the middle of the storyline. It was a mess getting all this stuff done, but I did it and I'm happy with the way it turned out."

The "about-turn" Burden refers to came unexpectedly. "They said, 'Do a crossover,' and I turned in two stories. I did the first crossover and thought, 'Gee, I'm gonna be drawing so many characters,' because I had all the Turtles in it, as well as the Mystery Men and other guys. I said, 'Maybe I should do one with just two characters, for the first 50 or 80 percent of it, one with just Flaming Carrot and Raphael, and have all the others come in later.' Kevin liked both stories and said, 'Let's do both of them—we'll draw the one with all the characters up here, and release it as a Mirage book.' That was a pretty good editorial decision!" Burden chuckles. "The Turtles were a lot of fun to write, pretty cool. They're easy to draw. It came naturally to me."

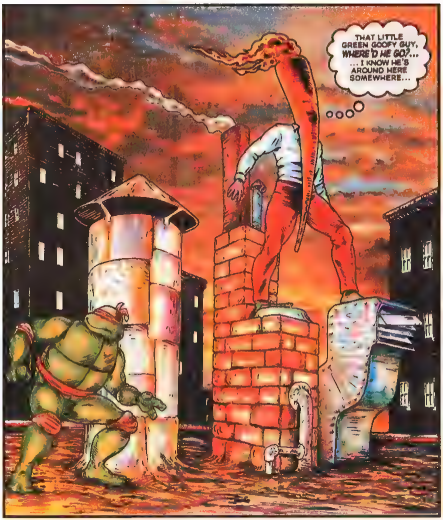
Meeting the Turtles marks the Flaming Carrot's second such excursion. "I did crossovers with *Cerebus* because Dave Sim left a message on my answering machine," Burden recalls. "He said, 'Hey, Bob, I'll be down in Atlanta in two days. We're gonna do a crossover. You got any problems with that, give me a call.' I didn't call him back. He showed up and we did the whole thing in 10 days. It was basically Dave's baby, so he was in charge. He wrote it and put it all together, and I would add in my character somewhat. I drew the Carrot, he drew Cerebus."

The writer/artist has also taken a crack at other company-owned characters, such as Spider-Man. "I talked about it with Marvel at one time, and we even put out a press release, but I was too busy with other stuff to go through with it," he shrugs. "It came about when I was talking to Art Suydam, and Art knew that I wanted to do some stories for him because I think his art is really good. His *Cholly & Flytrap* stories are great stuff." Though the project fell through, Burden is still willing to write the wallcrawler. "I would do another Spider-Man story if Todd McFarlane would draw it. I *did* write a two-part, 21-page *Cholly & Flytrap* story for Epic. I think it's weird, witty and pretty good. I haven't heard from Art yet on it. We also talked about a Batman story."

Naturally, Burden has an offbeat approach in mind for the caped crusader. "It would start with the *Dark Knight* Batman talking to Alfred, with a few stiff brandies under his belt. He's thinking about the halcyon days of yesteryear, when everything was simple. He falls asleep and the next thing he knows, he's on a stakeout with Robin in the Batmobile. He sees a strange character coming along, and it's Flaming Carrot.

"The treatment I did was pretty wacky," Burden goes on. "It was a send-up of *World's Finest* with Batman, Robin, Superman and Flaming Carrot. Flaming Carrot joins this super-team, and Batman gets sidetracked and goes off to discos. It all takes place in the 1963 period style that I grew up with, before *Batman* got slick. It was the pre-66 style Batman with giant pieces of furniture. The main villain was the Penguin, and he gets captured by the Flaming Carrot, who does obnoxious stuff to him. I talked to the people at DC and hoped they would get Curt Swan to do it. It would have been fun, but you can't do everything!"

To Burden, teaming the Batman with the crime-busting carrot makes perfect sense. "Flaming Carrot is a surrealistic version of the early Batman, when he still carried a gun," Burden reasons. "He's stupid and has no super-powers. He's kind of an anti-Batman! The biggest strategic advantage to the Flaming Carrot is that he cleans the deck of all misconceptions of the superhero."



Turtles Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Mirage Studios

Burden liked teaming the Carrot with the Turtles due to "a stylistic compatibility between the two books."

Burden's offbeat ideas come from a variety of sources. "Over the years, I've developed to the point where I can tap into the furthest orbit of my mind," he claims. "You get weird ideas right before you go to sleep. I would say the ideas come because of several contributing factors, including getting hit in the head with a rock when I was young," he says, smiling. "That's facetious, of course!"

Perhaps most distinctive is the way Burden's storylines spring from everywhere. One of his oddest (and most heralded) came from something overheard at a party. "I was just sitting there," Burden recalls, "when suddenly, this guy blurted out of nowhere, '*Oowee*! A dead dog leaped up and flew around the room!' I said, 'I'm going to use that for a story title, but hell, what kind of story goes with a title like that?' "

Burden has a foolproof method of preserving his outlandish inspirations. "I carry a tape recorder with me at *all* times. Several people have harassed me about that. I need it for when I come up with strange ideas. The tape recorder takes things down, and I organize them into names for characters, plot complications, whatever. You've got to put them down on tape," Burden warns, "or you lose them for all time!"

When a character becomes popular, he invariably gives birth to spin-offs—books devoted to the adventures of his pals, family and girl friend. Bob Burden's cult hero is no exception.

"We have [special issues devoted to] Flaming Carrot's friend Uncle Billy, Sponge Boy, his little special friend, and the Junior Carrot Patrol," Burden lists. "Besides being a comic book, *Flaming Carrot* has been an introduction point for a number of characters. You can do that with a comic-book creation—ride the others on the coattails of the successful one. Right now, we've got *The Bonepickers*; it's about a character called the Pigwoman and her four common-law husbands who go around collecting redeemable bottles and buy a color TV set with the money."

Having created this insane stable of comic-book hooligans, Burden professes to have no favorites. "I like 'em *all*," he insists. "I've got characters I haven't had a chance to bring in yet. The Punctuator is one; when he hits people, he leaves exclamation points, question marks and sometimes, semicolons. There's also Coupon Guy, who will only eat food he buys with coupons. My favorite villain would probably be the Artless Dodger, because he's the most developed and most fun. He's like my Joker; he does wacky stuff, but he kills people."

There's a vague possibility that Flaming Carrot will follow his Teenage Turtle co-stars and go Hollywood. "There has been some interest, but they don't quite know what to make of it," Burden remarks. "Many people have been esoterically interested, people who are on the bail and can see the potential there, but none to where it's a big deal. I've been holding out. We've talked to many people and pitched at many places. Some big names, but nothing's come of it so far."

As a film buff, he has his dream picks. "I would like to have David Lynch or Fellini take the property and just go nuts with it! I'll hear from them,

(continued on page 66)

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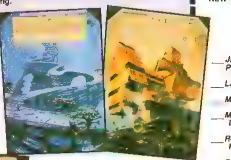

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The Strange & The Bold

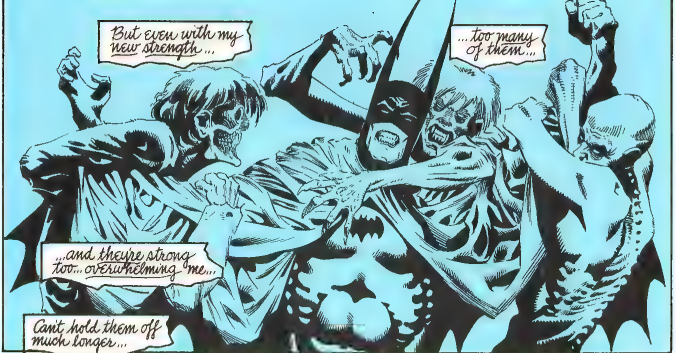
Batman & Thomas Edison? The Dark Knight vs. Dracula? On an infinity of Elseworlds, anything is possible.

By DANIEL DICKHOLTZ

Back in the early 1960s, Superman died, having met his end at the Kryptonite-filled hands of the diabolical Lex Luthor. Then again, he also lived to enjoy his marriage to Lois Lane. He also married and had children with Lana Lang. He never became Superman. He never became Clark Kent. Batman was his worst enemy. Luthor his best friend, and the small rocket that carried him to Earth arrived many years later. And Krypton never died.

Long before Marvel attempted anything similar with *What If?*, these "imaginary stories," which were frequently entirely free from anything resembling continuity, offered

Batman and all related characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1991 DC Comics Inc.



All Red Rain Art: Kelly Jones/Malcolm Jones III

Dracula's horde of vampires prepares to feast on Batman in *Red Rain*.

glimpses into both what might have been and what may yet be for the Man of Steel and his friends. But, as more and more outlandish premises with increasingly implausible plot developments began to fill comic pages, the concept fell into disrepute, and DC only cautiously, and rarely, returned to such material over the last 20 years.

That is, until the success of *Gotham by Gaslight*, a Prestige Format one-shot which featured a Dark Knight emerging 100 years ago to battle Victorian Gotham City's growing crime problem—specifically an escaped Jack the Ripper (CS #10). Originally intended to be part of a special series of alternate *Secret Origins* that then-editor Mark Waid was trying to develop, the project has since provided the means to once again tell such stories. "Only cool, not the sort of 'What if Superman's hair was green and he was three-and-a-half feet tall and Lois Lane was a Marine?'," writer Brian Augustyn comments, "but something of *real* consequence to amplify characters."

So, capitalizing on the possibilities a myriad of alternate universes can offer, DC's new Elseworlds line of Prestige Format and hardcover graphic novels debuts this month with *Holy Terror*, Alan Brennert and Norm Breyfogle's tale of a Batman hunting his enemies in a Church-dominated world (see page 25). With its current, though by no means exclusive, emphasis on diverse depictions of the Dark Knight, responsibility for the irregularly published series has naturally fallen to Batman editor Denny O'Neil.

"As a result of *Gotham by Gaslight*, which was not my project, I began getting a lot of pretty good ideas for similar material. It seemed to me that it was a good idea to publish some of this, yet I wanted to do it in a way that *didn't* weaken continuity.

"So, the logical answer seemed to be to create an imprint, a separate logo, and identify them all clearly—not as 'imaginary stories,' but rather as the idea of the hero placed in another context. The risk is, of course, that it will weaken continuity despite all our protestations, but I think it's a risk worth taking because we're going to get some neat stories out of it. What people have to know is that the 'real' Batman saga is in *Batman, Detective* and some issues of *Legends*," states the editor. "These other things are the idea—the archetype, if you want to use a fancy word—of Batman placed in different contexts."

Stressing that "this is a creator-driven project, more than most, in that we'll publish books when we get good ideas, or we get good creative people who come in and say that they want to do something," O'Neil warns that there will be a wait between entries in this series. "I would like to do as many as four a year, but I'm emphatically *not* promising that. We would rather keep working on them until we've done everything we can to make 'em good than to hit some arbitrary dates."

Batman could stop the *Master of the Future*, but he retired years ago.

Expected before the year's end, however, is *Master of the Future*, Brian Augustyn and Eduardo Barreto's Prestige Format sequel to *Gotham by Gaslight*. In the few years since the Victorian-era Batman apprehended Jack the Ripper (and learned the truth behind his parents' murder), Commissioner Tolliver has managed to use his newfound popularity to become mayor, Inspector Gordon has been promoted to Tolliver's old job, "and Bruce Wayne has retired from the cape and cowl," Augustyn notes. "Having located and punished his parents' killer, his quest is over. And since it was such a personal and obsessive quest in the first place, he genuinely feels that he's better off without it—except that he's bored, restless and feeling oddly incomplete and unsure of his retirement until a

All Master of the Future Art: Eduardo Barreto

Alexandre LeRoi thinks "he should be the only one to lead mankind into the future," warns writer Brian Augustyn.

World's Fair is put on in Gotham."

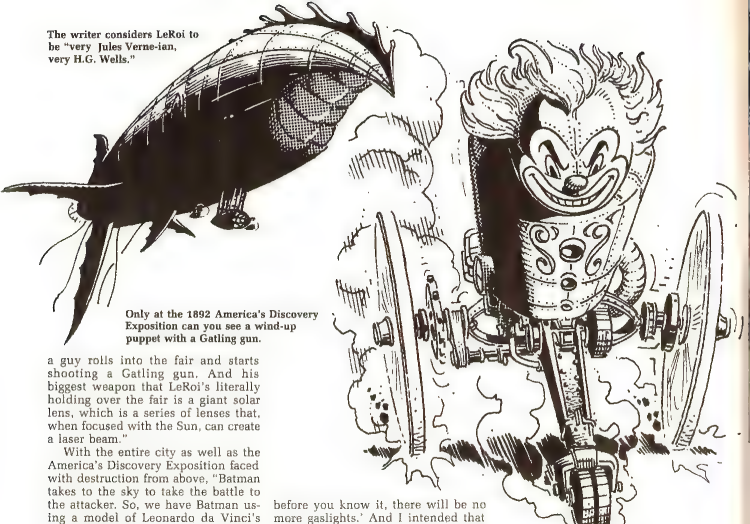
Four centuries after Columbus found the New World, the 1892 America's Discovery Exposition is celebrating by giving visionaries like Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell a forum to display the areas they've been exploring, the wonders that tomorrow is likely to bring. While nearly everyone else is dazzled by the vast array of inventions displayed, including automobiles and early versions of flying machines, there remains one who is unimpressed, Alexandre LeRoi.

"LeRoi, who considers himself the Master of the Future, is the man who genuinely understands what the future is all about," Augustyn remarks. "He sees the Industrial Revolution that's already well underway as the beginnings of the downfall of mankind, and that humankind is embracing convenience in exchange for its soul. As he sees it, before you know it, the air is going to be spoiled by the smoke, the water is going to be spoiled by all the poisons that will be dumped into the rivers by the machines, the cities will become congested; the world will be a much worse place for there being unchecked progress. He's the one who sees it all, and therefore, he should be the only one to lead mankind into the future.

"Now, this guy is very much a scientific genius. He's a Victorian mad scientist. I mean, he is very Jules Verne-ian, very H.G. Wells. He has lots of clockwork, Victorian hi-tech. He flies around in an airship, a dirigible with steam-driven motors and fans. And he has lots of weird, wind-up stuff that does various and sundry bad, evil things. At one point, this wind-up puppet about half the size of

"All these [Elseworlds stories] are pretty damn gritty," notes editor Denny O'Neil.

Potter's Field... where the city of Gotham provides simple graves for the destitute, the forgotten, the unknown...
Free dirt, for the poor.
But had they tried to claim it while living, they would have been arrested as thieves and trespassers.



The writer considers LeRoi to be "very Jules Verne-ian, very H.G. Wells."

Only at the 1892 America's Discovery Exposition can you see a wind-up puppet with a Gatling gun.

a guy rolls into the fair and starts shooting a Gatling gun. And his biggest weapon that LeRoi's literally holding over the fair is a giant solar lens, which is a series of lenses that, when focused with the Sun, can create a laser beam."

With the entire city as well as the America's Discovery Exposition faced with destruction from above, "Batman takes to the sky to take the battle to the attacker. So, we have Batman using a model of Leonardo da Vinci's wing-flight thing like a hang-glider. We have a swordfight within the dirigible's iron strutwork between Batman and the villain; we have lots of fire, lots of big explosions, lots of ladies wearing Victorian dresses, stampeding horses, and just cool stuff in general. And cameos by a handful of historical figures, including Edison; Buffalo Bill drops by for a while. It's being drawn beautifully by Ed Barreto, and we're having a blast."

Notes Augustyn, in this graphic novel, "we meet for the first time Julie Madison, Bruce's fiancee, who's a pre-suffragette, independent woman who actually believes, while Batman is gone, that that's a mistake, that there *should* be a Batman. She's another forward thinker who can see the world getting ugly, and she thinks, from the vantage point of 1892, that only Batman can protect Gotham."

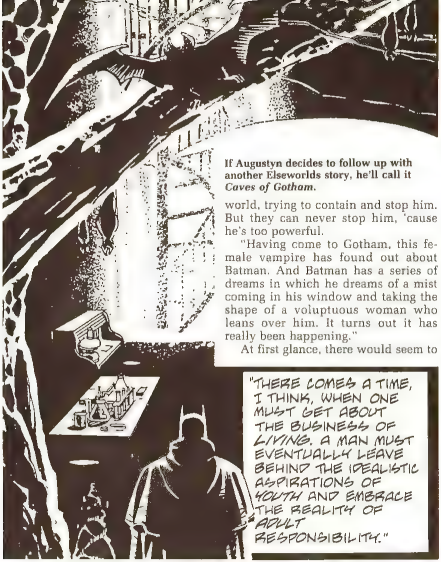
Although he has already returned once to this alternate past, Augustyn is hesitant about exploring it any further.

"Well, I'm not sure at this point how I feel about it," he confesses. "In the context of *Master of the Future*, there's a party at the fair, and I give Thomas Edison a piece of dialogue where he basically says, 'I'm displaying all the latest in incandescent lamps. This is the coming thing. Why, before you know it, there will be no more gaslights.' And I intended that as a cute, little 'This is my last one,' because I'm not sure how interested I am in perpetuating this 'pocket universe,' if you will. On the other hand, I have this great idea, so I'm torn. And the great idea, by the way, in case anybody wants to write in, is two years later, they begin to dig the subways for Gotham City, and they discover something very, very weird living under the city. So, that one line and the title, *Caves of Gotham*, is all I know. But it plays into other caves in Gotham as well, so..."

Just as the Victorian Batman's first adventure was heading to specialty shops, Augustyn had announced that if *Gotham by Gaslight* was at all successful, he and Mike Mignola would fashion a sequel that would pit their altered hero against one of the period's most famous fictional fiends, the Lord of Vampires himself, Dracula. Reminded of this, the writer relates, "What happened, more than anything else, was that Mike Mignola just wasn't available, and that was actually more his idea than mine. Not that I wasn't interested in it, but I didn't feel right taking it and running with another artist. [*Master of the Future*] developed out of a different connection with a different artist, Ed Barreto, working with some of the stuff I know, working towards his strengths, which is very definitely a decorative sense of period, and his own interest in science fiction, particularly old-fashioned science fiction. So, what happened was we passed on it and the obviousness of Batman and Dracula fell into other hands."

The concept has, in fact, become the basis for another Elseworlds project, also due out by year's end—*Red Rain*, a hardcover graphic novel written by Doug Moench. "I thought it was, if I do say so, such a brilliant idea, you know, the two bat-guys getting together and the whole bit," Moench remarks. "And I thought Kerry Jones was a *perfect* artist for it. I don't need to hype it [Jones' artwork]. It's spectacular. It makes his *Sandman* stuff look silly.

"Dracula has come, and he's feasting on the homeless and the ones that nobody will notice are missing," the writer reveals. "In fact, people will subconsciously be glad to see that there aren't so many people sitting around in the gutter. This makes for the perfect hunting ground for him. And he's being tracked by the Others, who are led by a female vampire who broke free of his spell long ago and has been following him around the


"THERE COMES A TIME, I THINK, WHEN ONE MUST GET ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF LIVING. A MAN MUST EVENTUALLY LEAVE BEHIND THE IDEALISTIC ASPIRATIONS OF YOUTH AND EMBRACE THE REALITY OF ADULT RESPONSIBILITY."

If Augustyn decides to follow up with another Elseworlds story, he'll call it *Caves of Gotham*.

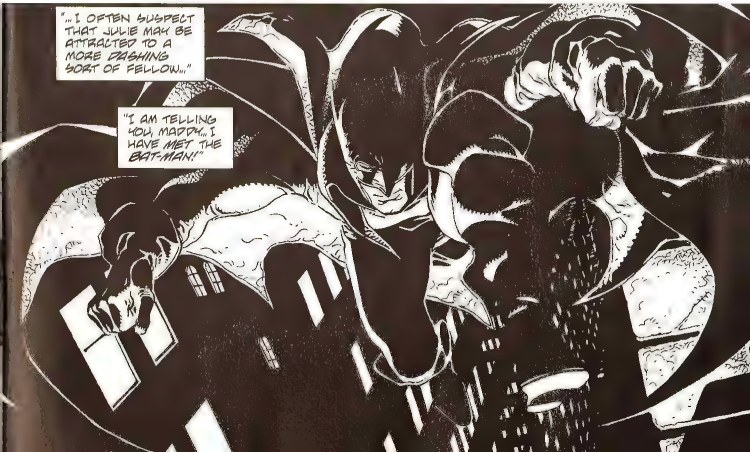
world, trying to contain and stop him. But they can never stop him, 'cause he's too powerful.

"Having come to Gotham, this female vampire has found out about Batman. And Batman has a series of dreams in which he dreams of a mist coming in his window and taking the shape of a voluptuous woman who leans over him. It turns out it has really been happening."

At first glance, there would seem to be little in this summary that suggests why this tale should be told in the Elseworlds format. After all, Marvel has had their established mainstream superheroes battle their own interpretation of the Lord of the Undead often enough and still remain within continuity. Yet it was the very fact that such occurrences have been virtually unknown in Gotham City that prompted Moench to take this route.

"What I wanted to do, and what I think I convinced Denny, was that we didn't need any excess baggage," he explains. "When you go to a horror movie, anything goes. You know it as soon as you go in. But, if you're watching *L.A. Law* or something, you're not going to accept vampires that easily. But you would if you went to see *Horror of Dracula*. I didn't want to be saddled with the excess baggage of 'Yes, vampires really are real. They really are in Gotham, even though the *Batman* book traditionally says they're not real, and...' In the Gotham comic-book reality, they're trying. I think, to do a very conservative version of consensus reality. No science fiction. Supernatural, but only to a certain extent, only where there's sort of a wink, a nod and, 'Yeah, maybe it happened and maybe it didn't.' There's always an out, the possibility that they were hallucinating or whatever, and I didn't want to have to

Augustyn says forward-thinkers such as Bruce Wayne's fiancee feel "only Batman can protect Gotham."



Moench thinks Batman fighting off vampires is "cool stuff." The Dark Knight might disagree.

overcome all of that. I wanted to just say, 'Well, this is a different Gotham and a different reality plane. And yeah, vampires exist, period.'

***Red Rain* writer Doug Moench describes his Dracula as "fury himself, a really nasty guy."**

"Now, even so, I do have Batman stunned by the fact that there are vampires around. He can't quite believe it, even within this other reality. Batman goes to an expert in the occult, and she has no qualms about believing this. She thinks he's kind of a dummy for not realizing it."

Aside from the undead, Moench notes, this modern-day alternate Gotham, one even more disturbing in appearance than its standard DC Universe counterpart, will soon be playing host to Elvis Presley and John Lennon's joint world tour. Its local politics have yielded a different result in its last mayoral race, and as the title indicates, "there's a red rain falling, presumably from pollution. It's, of course, a metaphor for dripping blood, but in this reality, the rain is red, and that's obviously not true in the 'real' Gotham. It's pretty obvious that it's *not* the same Gotham."

Setting *Red Rain* in this other reality "has led to some other wonderful things; Kelly can draw Batman in a new and sort of startling way without worrying that it's not consistent with the way Batman looks. The bat-ears are about three feet tall. I mean, this is a cool-looking Batman! And what he has done with the cape! The cape is just amazing! What he says to me is, 'Every time we see Batman, it has to be cool, the ultimate cool Batman shot I can think of at that time.' And he has some honeys in there."

Likewise, Moench can do things with the city's sentinel that "you couldn't do if this was the real Batman," things that by the graphic novel's end, he assures, would "change Batman forever! It should be a real shocking book. Too bad it couldn't be the real universe."

However, unlike the way their creators view the grim guardians of *Holy Terror* and *Master of the Future*, Moench feels the one found in *Red Rain* is virtually identical to the "real" caped crusader he scripted in the "Prey" storyline in *Legends of the Dark Knight*, "except he's totally different because of what's happening to him. He keeps looking in the mirror at his back, but we never see what he sees. There's something sprouting out of his back through most of the story, and it's really bothering him. And when he goes to a doctor to have his blood tested and he tries to open the door of his car, the handle comes off! And he realizes, 'It was locked, and I just tried to open it.' Then, he reaches down under the car and just lifts the whole car up with one hand effortlessly. So, these amazing changes are happening to him and he doesn't quite know why, except that he's having bizarre dreams."

To combat him, Moench has created a Dracula who is "the ultimate cool, continental kind of guy. When he gets pissed, he's fury itself, a really nasty guy. He's living in the sewers, and after infecting his first few victims, street people and so on, they become his toadies. And these toady vampires bring him the best ones, like runaway girls right off the bus terminal. And when they bring him a couple of these girls, he just says, 'Are they on drugs?' 'No, master. We checked them everywhere. No needle marks anywhere.' 'Then, bring them closer.' I mean, he's very cool about this, and...he's evil. That's it."

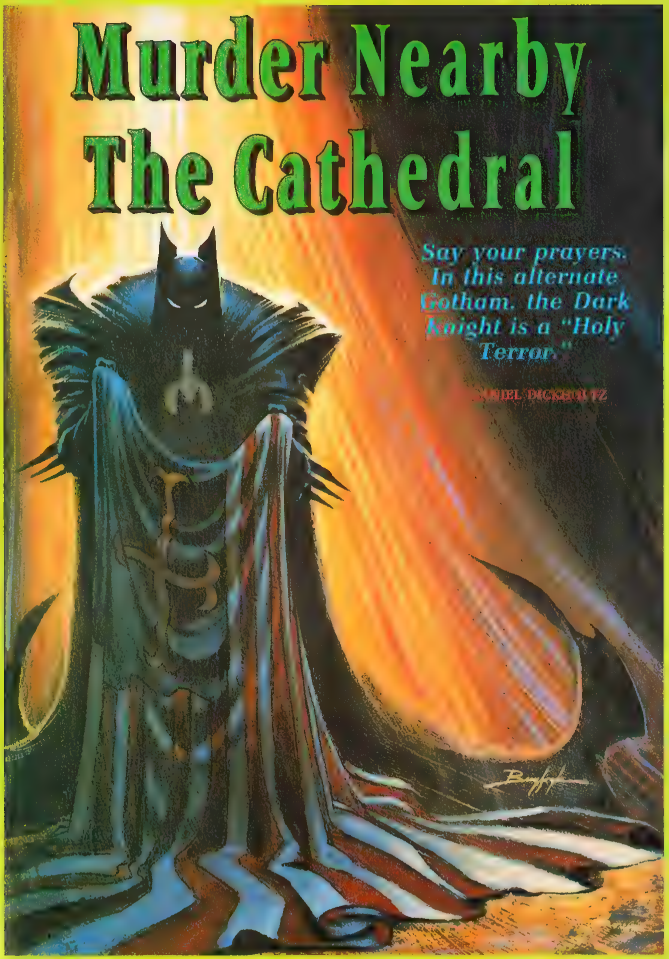
But more than how he himself views either the Dark Knight or his undead antagonist, what intrigues Moench is the way Kelly Jones sees them. "When I spoke to Kelly the first time, I said, 'Kelly, forgive me for saying this, but—and this is only a personal observation—your work here just blows away what you've done on *Sandman*, as good as that was.' And he says, 'Oh, absolutely! I can't believe it myself. It's the freedom and the subject matter and the story that

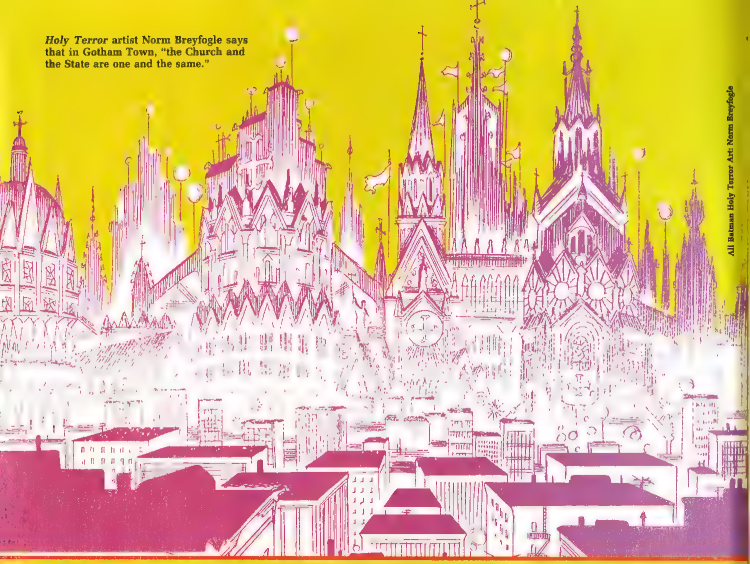
(continued on page 58)

Murder Nearby The Cathedral

Say your prayers. In this alternate Gotham, the Dark Knight is a "Holy Terror."

DANIEL PECKHOLTZ





Holy Terror artist Norm Breyfogle says that in Gotham Town, "the Church and the State are one and the same."

All Batman Holy Terror Art: Norm Breyfogle

In *this* year of our Lord, 1991, church spires dominate the skyline of Gotham Town and symbols of the crucifixion are virtually inescapable. Here, the frequently reinterpreted word of God has been translated into the law of man, and inquisitors like James W. Gordon often find themselves having to hunt down heretics, abortionists and homosexuals as zealously as they would bring in drug dealers, murderers and rapists. And somewhere amidst the rooftops lurks something that, given its bat-like form, could not possibly be heavensent, something determined to wring its justice from the city's highest Church officials.

"It's an alternate-reality Batman," artist Norm Breyfogle reveals, one who lives in a world where Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of England, did not die in 1658, but lived on to see his successful civil war against the Crown thrive. Consequently, Gotham exists today not in a free United States, but in an American Commonwealth where "the Church and the State are one and the same."

Written by Alan Brennert and drawn by Breyfogle, the Prestige format *Holy Terror*, the first project in DC's new Elseworlds line, a series of graphic novels which, at least initially, depict various versions of the Dark Knight (see related article on page 19), finds the adult Bruce Wayne about to set himself on what will become his life's work. Driven by the deaths of his parents, Wayne is on the verge of dedicating himself to helping others and battling evil wearing the robes of the priesthood when he receives a visit from Gordon. Wracked with guilt over his participation in the cover-up surrounding the Wayne murder case, Gordon, now Lord Commissioner of Gotham, confesses what he knows of the matter to Bruce, who then secretly "dons his father's devil costume from a play that he wore when he was a young man, which of course is a new design of the Batman costume, and goes out to seek vengeance."

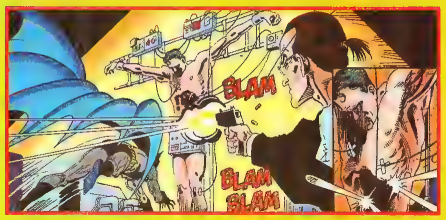
Breyfogle's involvement with this project, however, might itself have remained only a part of some alternate history had it not been for the whim of another artist.

"I heard that it was offered originally to Neal Adams," he recalls. "Neal didn't want to do it; he turned it down, maybe because of the... I don't know why. I wouldn't want to speculate. Anyway, after that, Dick Giordano—this is what I heard, second-hand information—thought it would be appropriate for me. And I've been itching to get out of the regular monthly format, so I jumped at the chance. Plus, I liked the story."

With more than 300 years of historical changes to take into account, depicting the distinctly different fashions and styles of this particular present required the artist to delve back into the actual past.

"I did a little bit of research. I spent a couple of days in the library, and picked up a bunch of books on architecture, which I had laying all over my floor while I was working," Breyfogle admits. "I've got an *Encyclopedia Brittanica* set, and I looked at a bunch of costumery from the 16th century, 17th century, early America, the Puritans, and I basically combined a few, just a very few of those costume ideas with modern clothing, and that's the result!"

As for this Dark Knight's attire, the artist confides that while Brennert



The Dark Knight takes cover behind a Man of Steel.

specified a few changes in the bat-uniform's usual appearance, Breyfogle made further alterations.

"If you go much further than I did, it really wouldn't look like Batman at all anymore. I had a number of different costume designs. One of them, it was tights all the way down to his feet, and he didn't have the shorts on. But since it was Batman, and it actually even looked better with the shorts, we decided to keep them. I figured you've got to keep the ears, the cowl and the gloves with the gauntlets: those are necessary. Besides, the fins on his gloves are very Gothic-looking anyway, so I just enhanced them a bit, gave them basically two corners instead of one.

"The only other difference was the belt. I made it look more Gothic. He has to have a utility belt, so I gave him a utility belt. I experimented with giving him a utility *bag* actually, but it just became too cumbersome, and besides, the belt looked more Gothic once I put it on him. I just gave it some arches and some spires, and... I don't know. I think I could possibly have taken it further, but I was comfortable with how far I took it. Actually, it's a pretty radical divergence. It's at least as different a costume as Mike Mignola's version was in *Gotham by Gaslight* [CS #10].

"I did take many more liberties, however, with the Batmobile, which Alan Brennert had not even written into the script, but I threw it in. It looks like a rolling gargoyle."

But, behind the wheel of this much more monstrous machine and within this somewhat less familiar outfit is a hero that readers may not find too far removed from their own. To Breyfogle, though, there are considerable differences between this particular grim guardian of Gotham and the one he draws on a monthly basis.

"I would say that this Batman, if anything, is more obsessed [than the "real" caped crusader], or maybe 'fanatical' is a better word for it. At the same time, he's even more virtuous. And he's also much more innocent; I guess that falls in with virtuous. However, he's much more gullible and more childlike. He's a product of the Church state gone bad."

Applying the alternate universe concept to superheroes is an idea that has fascinated Breyfogle for years, although when he first became aware of it, DC was calling such tales "imaginary stories." "The first one that really grabbed me was the *World's Finest* issue with Superman and Batman as brothers way back in 1966 or so," he recalls. Now, with the outlet the Elseworlds line provides, Breyfogle has been given rein to devise his own realities.

"As the visual artist of this group of creators, basically it just frees you up to design new costumes, design the different worlds. This is one example, but I hear that there are other ones in the works, like Batman in the future, and—I don't know if it's going to be done or not, but Batman as an ancient Roman! It sounds ludicrous to me, but I guess it's all in how it's treated. So, you could take it much further adrift than it was done in *Holy Terror*. *Holy Terror* is just an extremely Church-like or Gothicized version of the Batman today, so it's not really that big of a difference, although I did have fun with it.

"The writers, it frees them up as much as the artist. It allows them to explore the same character in different settings. It all depends on the character, though. Some characters are more suited for different interpretations. Batman is a chief example."

So, with all the possibilities that Elseworlds offers him, it's perhaps understandable that Breyfogle would rather not repeat himself. At the suggestion of working on a *Holy Terror II*, the artist admits he would "give it a shot," but "I don't think that there's really much chance of *Holy Terror* being done as a sequel. Well, I don't know. I shouldn't talk for Alan Brennert, but it wouldn't be my preference. I would rather do a different

Breyfogle made slight changes in Batman's costume, but decided, "you've got to keep the ears, the cowl and the gloves with the gauntlets."

All Batman Holy Terror Characters & Art: Tradewask & Copyright 1991 DC Comics Inc.

version again altogether."

And while he's waiting to see what other proposals come his way, the artist has an alternate image of the Darknight Detective that he's toying with himself.

"You could do Batman in Gotham City super-realistically, where maybe he doesn't even wear a bat-costume. If you wanted to take it all the way, he could just wear dark clothing like the Black Hood done by Red Circle [also known as Archie Adventure].

"That's basically the concept in a nutshell, that you can handle the characters *any* way you want to. But it does open a bunch of other questions, too. I mean, how different can a character be and still be recognizable? If you made it too different, you wouldn't want to put it under the Elseworlds title, because it really wouldn't be the same. It wouldn't be recognizable as any character. It could be recognizable as the character by reading the story, but visually, it might not be recognizable at all."

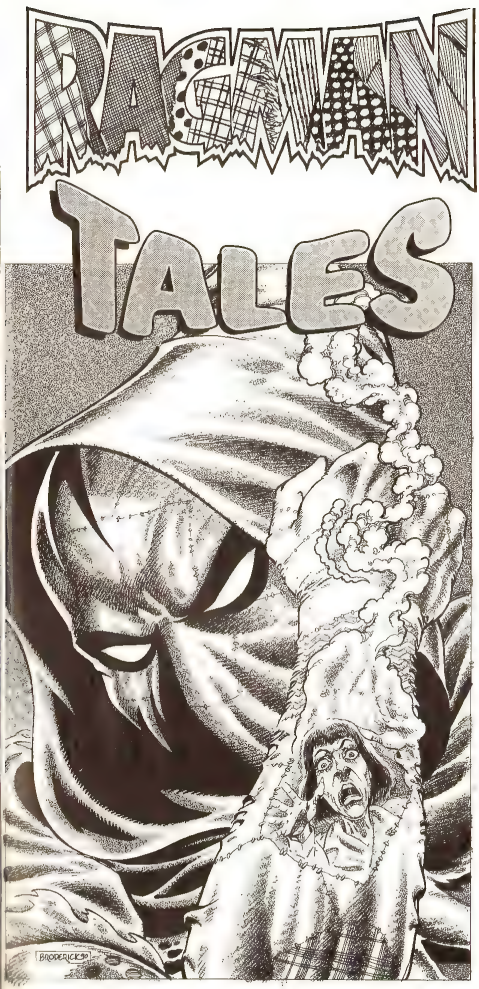
However, since this line of graphic novels is open to other characters as well, the artist wouldn't mind offering a startling look at a champion known the world over, the Man of Steel.

"Now, Superman would be really fun because he's so powerful," Breyfogle remarks. "If you did an alternate reality version of Superman, you could make it cataclysmic! It would definitely be world-changing. You could do in an alternate reality Superman what you *can't* do in the regular books. You could do what Alan Moore was doing with Miracleman. You could go even further. Superman becomes God! Or at least world dictator. Or is that being done in that crossover [*Armageddon 2001*]? Of course, I don't know who's going to be Monarch."

For the moment, though, it is the Batman of the familiar DC Universe that Norm Breyfogle continues to confront across his drawing board every month, a prospect he, unlike the villains he pits against the hero, doesn't find disturbing in the least.

"I always wanted to draw him," he confides. "It's a combination of nostalgia, design concerns, affinity for the character. I guess when it comes right down to it, it sounds kind of superficial, but it's equal parts character and just the design, his look. Since I'm handling the visual side of things, the look is very important. And his cape is just resultant for eternal permutations of design. However, the character, he's really so archetypal. It's like he and Superman are the two blueprints upon which almost all other characters are different variations."

The Batmobile in *Holy Terror* "looks like a rolling gargoyle," notes the artist.



They're picking up the pieces of some tattered lives to re-create an offbeat hero.

By T.L. JOHNS

He comes from the worst part of town with a past tied into the history of the world and the beliefs of a nation. He's a compassionate and secret defender working in the same city as one of the most famous crime-fighters of all time, yet not many know his name. He is Ragman.

The character had a short-lived mini-series in the late '70s, courtesy of DC Comics and creators Robert Kanigher and Joe Kubert. Now, he's returning with the help of writer Robert Loren Fleming and artist Pat Broderick (assisted by Keith Giffen) for an eight-issue, monthly mini-series this month.

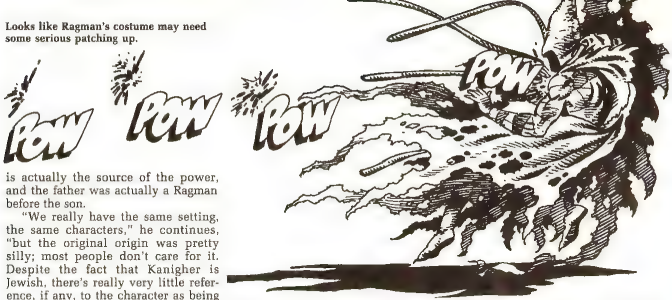
Kanigher and Kubert first unveiled Ragman in 1976. Also known as the "Tatterdemalion Man," *Ragman's* run lasted for only five of its six issues. His other appearances over the years included *The Brave & the Bold* and *Batman* and *Batman Family*. "He really hasn't had very much exposure," admits Fleming, "yet many people remember the character because he was so striking and original, and worked on by Kubert, a big fan favorite. So, despite the fact that Ragman has had very little published, he seems to hold a continuing fascination for many people. We've done more with Ragman than has ever been done."

Gotham City's slums are the literal home for Rory Regan and his father, Gerry. Together, they run a combination junk store/pawn shop called "Rags-n-Tatters." In the first issue, Rory's father is murdered, an event which changes his life forever. If this doesn't sound like the Ragman origin you remember, that's because it *isn't*.

Fleming, a New York State native who has written such diverse titles as *Underworld* and *The Honeymooners* and created *Ambush Bug*, would be the first to tell you that while names and places have stayed intact, most of *Ragman* has been revamped.

"Our version is *slightly* different from the Kanigher/Kubert version," he explains. "You still have the Gotham City slums and the junk store, the father and son. They look basically the same, but in our version, rather than the father creating the son's uniform and the powers being gained from an accident that happened, the *uniform*

Looks like Ragman's costume may need some serious patching up.



is actually the source of the power, and the father was actually a Ragman before the son.

"We really have the same setting, the same characters," he continues, "but the original origin was pretty silly; most people don't care for it. Despite the fact that Kanigher is Jewish, there's really very little reference, if any, to the character as being Jewish. I'm not even sure if they were supposed to be Jewish. We've enhanced that considerably, or added it completely, I'm not sure which."

In the Kanigher/Kubert version, Gerry Regan was an alcoholic living in the slums with his son, trying to make the best of running the junk shop. Somehow, he had some money hidden from some mobsters, who came looking for it at the junkyard, where Gerry and his drinking buddies hung out. The mobsters shot down some electric wires, which landed atop the tipsy friends and electrocuted them. Rory came in at the last minute to save his father, but while grabbing Gerry's hand to pull him out, he received a jolt from all of them.

"We joked that the old Ragman had 'the power of six hobos,' " laughs Fleming. "We didn't like how he got the suit either. The thing about it being Rory's birthday and his father making him this suit out of rags from the junkyard...it was just silly.

"In our *Ragman*, we went back to the legend of the Golem, the defender of the Jewish people. In our version, the Jews became uncomfortable with the idea of being defended by what was, after all, a monster. Golem, translated literally, means 'body without soul,' " he adds. "A council of Rabbis convened and decided that a human agent should be introduced. So, they used the same mystical incantation used to create the Golem but, instead of clay, they used rags. They created a uniform that required a human agent to animate it. Therefore, there would be a moral character to their defender.

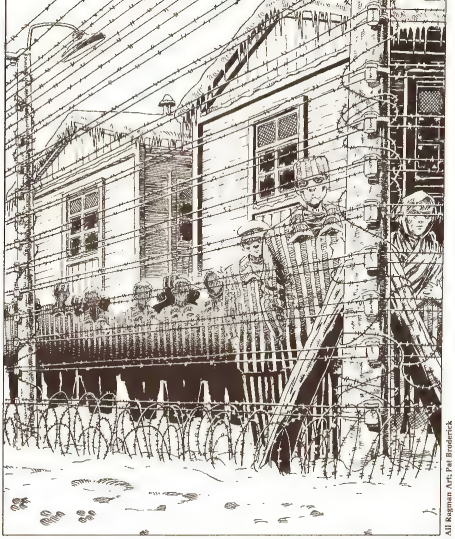
"Actually, the Ragman was carefully chosen. He had to be a worthy man and receive elaborate training from one of the Rabbis on the council in order to properly equip him to wear the costume and use it effectively. The costume is composed of living, evil souls, so it's a matter of actually mastering the costume."

The suit plays an important role in the new *Ragman*. While Kanigher often noted that the outfit had a life of its own, it does in the Fleming/Broderick/Giffen version.

"He doesn't put on the costume," the writer explains. "It *climbs* onto him. The costume is alive. The rags are also attracted to evil, so this helps Ragman know where to go and where he's most needed. And," he relates enthusiastically, "if he encounters someone, he can shed the rags right off his body and they'll engulf the individual, completely incapacitating them. When the rags leave the individual and return to Ragman's body, the person is left brain-dead, and a new rag is smoking on Ragman's body.

"He also floats on air currents.

"Ragman doesn't put on the costume," notes Fleming. "*It climbs* onto him. The costume is alive."



All Ragman Art: Pat Broderick

In Fleming's *Ragman*, the Jewish people created their protector to battle Nazis.

The costume makes the person wearing it as light as rags. He's almost invulnerable. The only way to kill the suit is to completely engulf it in flames. It's hard to get your hands on him—you could grab him and he could completely dissipate. He's extremely strong, very fast and agile, and he has a certain insight into who he's fighting because the rags can sense evil."

Much of the series, says Fleming, will be devoted to the suit's origin and Gerry Regan's part in history. "Gerry is actually a Polish Jew named Jerzy Reganovitch, who had been living in the Jewish ghetto during the Nazi overthrow. As Ragman, he played a large part in the Jewish uprising, but Gerry was so devastated by this tragedy that he couldn't put the suit on again. So, he emigrated to America and refused to tell his son anything about the suit."

Readers will be introduced to several characters in *Ragman*, including the Rabbi who comes in to help Rory learn to use the uniform correctly.

"The original Rabbi appears from the Warsaw ghetto, the one who was [Rory's] father's friend and mentor. He had lost the trail of the suit, but once Rory becomes the Ragman, the Rabbi detects the uniform's presence and comes to help and instruct him."

Fans of the original *Ragman* will remember Betty Burg, a nosy newspaperwoman "obviously based on Lois Lane." Betty appears in the new version as well, but in a considerably different way.

"We made her into a bag lady, but she's something of a seer," Fleming explains. "She's a real straight-talker with a heavy Brooklyn accent. When Betty makes an observation, you can bet she's onto something. For example, she warns Gerry that these guys are out to get him before he's murdered. She knows what's going down in this neighborhood."

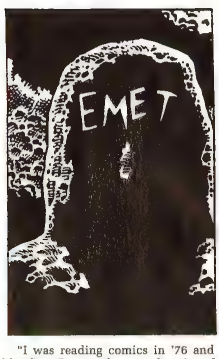
In addition to supporting characters, Ragman meets his share of villains. "There's a villain who's a Donald Trump-type, but we changed the schtick of this character. You always have these characters who want to clean out the ghetto so that they can build on it. The reason this guy wants to clean out the ghetto is because he's from the ghetto and just wants to destroy it. He wants to see it *leveled*, because as long as that ghetto is there and he can see it from his penthouse tower window, he's tainted.

"The Golem also comes into the series. When the Rabbi survived the concentration camp he was sent to, he couldn't find Gerry. So, the Rabbi created a Golem. By this time, the Golem has lasted for 40 years and has developed a human personality. Like the Rabbi, the Golem is drawn towards the mystical traces. Since there is only a limited amount of mystical energy, the Golem and the Ragman cannot co-exist."

The Mob convinces ex-Ragman Gerry Regan to give up his Rags-n-Tatters shop.

Selected Ragman Art: Brusilofsvoic Keith Giffen/Finishes: Pat Broderick

All Ragman Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1991 DC Comics



Writer Robert Loren Fleming says the new *Ragman* examines "the legend of the Golem, the defender of the Jewish people."

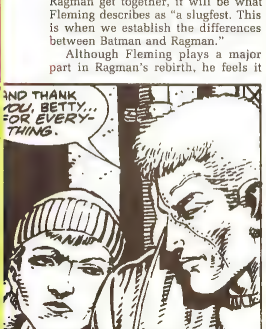
Making an appearance in the mini-series' last issue is Gotham's Dark Knight, Batman. He has been hearing and reading about the things going on in his town, and when he and Ragman get together, it will be what Fleming describes as "a slugfest. This is when we establish the differences between Batman and Ragman."

Although Fleming plays a major part in Ragman's rebirth, he feels it was more of a team project headed by Andy Helfer, and that he was simply asked to join.

"I was asked to do it, so I can't say I was attracted to it," he admits. "Andy got this thing moving. He, Keith Giffen and I sat down in Andy's apartment one day, and we just spent the afternoon talking about Ragman and the ideas Keith and I had come up with. It was the three of us throwing things into a pot. We taped this conversation, and it was a little of each of us as far as its genesis.

"Then, Keith and I took the tape, and we listened to it along the way [of the project] to make sure that we were staying on track. Keith did a monster share of the plotting, and many of the suggestions Andy and I gave him were incorporated into the plot. Keith was originally set to draw the series, but he became too busy. He pencilled the first issue, so instead of breakdowns for the the first issue, full pencils were sent to Pat Broderick, who did most of the drawing in the ink stage. So, Keith's primarily responsible for most of the ideas that we've added to our original version. It's primarily him, with Andy and I kibbitzing on the side."

Fleming, who added the dialogue directly from Giffen's breakdowns, is quick to credit his Ragman artist. "Pat is responsible for the look of the thing beyond the storytelling. I'm very pleased with what he did. *Ragman*'s one of his best jobs, and it gave much of his work a new dynamic."



Keith Giffen and Fleming have transformed Betty Burg, a reporter in the original *Ragman*, into a bag lady.

Like many other writers at work on revamping characters, Fleming says he refused to go back and reread Ragman's prior history until after the new series was underway.

"I was reading comics in '76 and [the first *Ragman*] was a favorite of mine," he recalls. "Robert Kanigher is actually a favorite writer of mine, and he now lives not too far from me. We've become friends, so we talk on the phone and trade lunches. He's a mentor of mine, so it's pretty easy to jump onto a character of his; I have an affinity for it. I made sure I didn't go and read any of it [the original series] because when you do someone else's character, I think you really have to do it your *own* way. I didn't want to cleave too closely to what he had already done."

Although Fleming is unsure as to response to the mini-series, he thinks he knows why Ragman has continued to be popular. "You had a character who came from a background of poverty and was a real humanitarian. It was a classic notion of someone trying to help their fellow man, particularly someone who was in this ghetto, looking to do good.

"It's the story of the little man trying to help his fellow man, as opposed to Batman, who has no contact with poverty except what he might run into a course of his adventure. He then goes back home and his butler serves him some Earl Grey tea. [Ragman's] a very different approach to a crime-fighter, and I always thought his costume was really cool.

"This is better than the Aquaman stuff we did," compares Fleming. "I felt that the Aquaman mini-series was more straight superhero fare, so it was less of my cup of tea. [Ragman] is a bit more involved, a bit closer to what I enjoy doing, like *Hell on Earth*, which Keith and I did together, or *Underworld*; it's more complex. It's very hard to do the same old thing

(continued on page 60)

AN ANIMATED LIFE

Several ver[illegible] of Maleficent were developed before [illegible] final look [illegible]

Sleeping Beauty Art Copyright 1959 The Walt Disney Company

Smiling way down deep, Marc Davis had designs on Disneyland.

By KYLE COUNTS

Regular films take actors and photograph them. We start with a blank page. To animate means to bring to life—we literally create life. We can make a personality out of *anything*, even a pushpin. We can do what *nobody else* can."

Marc Davis doesn't mean to sound omnipotent. It's just that the 78-year-old artist knows whereof he speaks. As one of the surviving "Nine Old Men" of Disney animation (Ward Kimball, Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas are the others), Davis has worked on several of the art form's most memorable features. In the process, he had helped create some of animation's most beloved characters—among them Flower, Thumper, Tinkerbell and Cruella de Vil. When he retired in March 1978 after 43 years in the business, the studio model shop gave him a soft-sculpture replica of himself, a fitting tribute to the craftsman one modelmaker called "a man who always smiles from way down deep."

A native of California who became interested in drawing at an early age, Davis was formally trained at two prestigious art schools, the Kansas City Art Institute and Los Angeles' Otis Art Institute (now Otis/Parsons). However, he credits his parents, Harry and Mildred, with igniting his passion by exposing him to things artistic in the form of museums and zoos. When his money ran out while attending the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco, he took his sketchbook each morning to the city zoo and continued his education on his own.

Davis joined Walt Disney Studios in 1935 at their Hyperion Avenue location, just over the hill from the Los Angeles River, when there were fewer than 300 employees on the company payroll. As one of the studio's higher-paid artists—he made $22.50 a week, a salary reflective of his superior skills as an artist—he assisted Grim Natwick on Disney's first feature-length cartoon, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Following that, the artist worked on *Bambi*, *Song of the South*, *Fun and Fancy Free*, *So Dear to My Heart* (a mix of live action and animation), *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *101 Dalmatians*, his swan song as an animator (see CS SPECTACULAR #5 for more on Davis' career). In between, there were five shorts (including 1945's "Duck Pimples" and "Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom," the studio's first widescreen experiment) and five episodes of the *Wonderful World of Disney* TV series.

After the first release of *101*

In addition to Maleficent, the animator set up the character of *Sleeping Beauty* herself, Briar Rose.

Davis (right) developed story and character concepts for several Disney attractions, including the Country Bear Jamboree.

All Davis Photos Copyright 1993 The Walt Disney Company

Dalmatians ("I'm glad Cruella was the last 'people' animation I did," remarks the artist, "it's always good to go out on a high note"), Davis and several fellow artists tried to interest Walt Disney in making an animated version of *Chanticleer* (based on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*), but it wasn't to be.

"The business people at the studio pretty much convinced Walt that the animated features were costing too much and taking too long," Davis laments. "Several of us took this idea of *Chanticleer* and worked on it. I thought it had *tremendous* possibilities. Ken Anderson worked on it, as did several other men who worked with me at that time.

"We had a meeting about it, and all these guys came in wearing dark vested suits. Nobody sat down: they said they preferred to stand. Walt came in and stood off to the side himself, which was very much unlike him. About two-thirds of the way into the storyboards, a voice from the back of the room said, 'You can't make a personality out of a chicken!' Then, they all walked out. Walt didn't say anything; he left too." (Who screamed out the "chicken" comment? Replies Davis: "It was some bookkeeper—for lack of a kinder term.")

Before he could attempt to rekindle Disney's enthusiasm in the *Chanticleer* project (which will soon be available in book form from Disney's new publishing arm, Hyperion Press; former Disney employee Don Bluth is making his own version of the Chaucer tale, titled *Rock-a-Doodle*), Davis was sidetracked.

"Walt asked me to do some things for Disneyland, then got me involved in the New York World's Fair," Davis details. "I worked on all four of the shows that he did. Quite honestly, he was more interested in developing those sorts of things than he was in the cartoons. While Milt [Kahl] and the others were working on *The Jungle Book*, I was off drawing Lincolns and pirates. Milt tried to get me back in animation, but Walt wouldn't hear of it."

Davis played a fundamental role in the creative planning of Disneyland. (He also later served as a consultant for EPCOT Center and Tokyo Disneyland.) "We all thought Disneyland was a bad idea at first," he admits, "but Walt knew what he was doing." As part of WED (now Walt Disney Imagineering, the corporation's creative adjunct for special projects), which he joined in 1961, Davis developed story and character concepts for several of the park's attractions, including Country Bear Jamboree, the Haunted Mansion,

Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln, the Jungle Cruise, Nature's Wonderland, the Enchanted Tiki Room, It's a Small World, Pirates of the Caribbean (his wife, Alice, designed costumes for the latter two), America Sings and the Carousel of Progress (originally designed for the General Electric exhibit at the World's Fair).

"The park was five years old before I did anything much for Disneyland," says Davis, whose official title ("the last time I saw it") was Senior Show Designer. "I had a very strong influence on how these attractions should be put together, in terms of how the public looks at things, how people should be seated, and so on."

Originally, these attractions were designed to tell stories with a beginning, middle and end. The Haunted Mansion, for instance, was to be the story of a girl about to be married whose beau is killed in a tragic accident. Disney decided, however, that such a linear approach was too complicated and time-consuming. "You can't tell a story in this medium," he told Davis. When Davis suggested that there might be too many visual gags for patrons to catch in a single visit, he remembers Disney saying, "Don't worry about that; they'll come back and see it again."

Davis approached each of his attractions as a piece of entertainment. "When Disneyland opened up, it was like a mini-World's Fair. So, I began my work with the idea in mind to amuse people, to give them laughs. I did a redesign of the African River Ride, putting in the elephant pool, the trapped safari [members of a safari are shown clinging to a tree, having been chased up its branches by a testy rhinoceros] and the laughing hyenas. I think that was the first laugh Disneyland ever had!"

Several attractions that Davis masterminded were never built. "I've designed an awful lot of things that were never done," he sighs. "Many of them were designed after Walt died, when [the] people [in power] were a little less sure of themselves. I got turned down on many first-rate attractions. I did a thing called the Western River Ride; that was never done. I did designs for the Enchanted Snow Palace, which I never fully completed. They passed on that, too. I then did a thing based on Latin American music using ideas from *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros*, figuring that we had a large Latin American population in Southern California and it would be very, very popular. I wasn't able to sell that. I did a redesign of the Grand Canyon diorama—I was *asked* to do

(continued on page 66)

Davis shows Cruella de Vil [illegible]

101 Dalmatians Art Copyright 1961 The Walt Disney Company

101 Dalmatians **villainess Cruella de Vil was "unlike any other Disney villain," says Marc Davis. "She was just flesh and blood."**

Disney Days

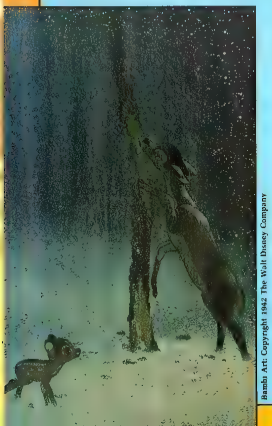
Marc Davis worked on 10 feature films during his days with Walt Disney. Here are his candid remarks about his work on the eight major animated titles prefaced by release date and his screen credit for each.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937), assistant animator (not credited): "A great film; I was delighted to have been a part of it."

Bambi (1942), animator: "I enjoyed working on *Bambi*. I created Flower the skunk, and I animated the sequences that show him hibernating and falling in love. I also had a lot to do with creating the characters of Bambi and Thumper as babies. I'll never forget the film's premiere at Grauman's Chinese Theater; when the skunk goes off into the flowers with this girl skunk, it got one of the biggest laughs I had ever heard. Everybody else was laughing, and I had tears coming out of my eyes. Hearing 3,000 people laughing with great pleasure at something I had done...they were tears of happiness.

"As far as the film itself, it was awfully one-sided in that man was the only enemy in the forest. But I will say that the scene where Bambi's mother gets shot is unparalleled. You don't see her get shot, and yet the impact of that scene still haunts people who were young at the time. It had to be a great piece of filmmaking to have affected people that way."

Song of the South (1946), directing animator: "I loved the animated



Bambi. Art: Copyright 1942 The Walt Disney Company

The animator enjoyed working on *Bambi*, but thought the film was "one-sided in that man was the only enemy in the forest."

Snow White. Art: Copyright 1937 The Walt Disney Company

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs **was "a great film," Davis recalls. "I was delighted to have been a part of it."**

part—great characters, great voices. I loved Uncle Remus himself. I thought that the live-action story was weak, but beautifully, beautifully photographed by the man who photographed *Citizen Kane* [Gregg Toland].

"I did the part where the bear and the fox build the tar baby and get it out on the road. Milt Kahl did the part where Brer Rabbit is caught and tries to talk himself out of his trap. A couple of other animators did the things in between."

Cinderella (1950), directing animator: "That was the first film Disney did after the war that was completely animated. It gets kind of clumsy here and there, but all in all, it's a pretty fair film. I did the sequence where Cinderella comes down with the gown that the mice have made for her, and the stepsisters tear it up, and she runs off into the garden and ducks down on the bench and sobs, and the fairy godmother appears. The godmother animation was done by Milt Kahl—a beautiful job.

"Somebody came to me one day and said they had just had lunch with Walt, and one of his guests asked, 'Mr. Disney, of all the animation that has been done at your studio, what's your favorite piece of animation?' He thought for a moment and said, 'Well, I guess I would have to say the scene where Cinderella gets her gown from the fairy godmother to go to the ball; it signifies that when all seems lost, your dreams can still come true if you just believe.' Obviously, the scene had something that hit Walt on an emotional level."

Alice in Wonderland (1951), directing animator: "I animated Alice for the tea party sequence, with Ward Kimball animating the Mad Hatter and the March Hare. That was the main sequence I did. Now, if the little girl had been wooden, it wouldn't have amounted to a damn thing. But she does come to life, and the sequence works.

"Yet I believe we were all disappointed when we saw it. We had enjoyed the Tenniel illustrations so much. To transpose those wonderful drawings we had been raised on into something that looked so different...it was distressing, I think, to many of us as artists. But now I own the videotape, and I've watched it a few times in the past year or so, and I must say I rather like it."

Peter Pan (1953), directing animator: "I did Tinkerbell. I can't take full credit for the character you saw, because there were other people who had done drawings of her before me, like Jack Miller. But the way the character was developed and so on, the final image that you saw on screen, was mine.

"I saw it in Florida a few years ago, and I was amazed. The film is quite good. There are things I wish had been done better, but I always feel that way. I remember Frank Thomas saying once—and it's quite true—'When you get down to the last two scenes in a picture, then you know how you should have done the whole thing.' "

Sleeping Beauty (1959), directing animator: "I set up the character of

Cinderella Art: Copyright 1949 The Walt Disney Company

Walt Disney's favorite animated scene came from *Cinderella*, a film which Davis thought was fair, but occasionally "clumsy."

Briar Rose, the princess, and I designed Maleficent. I did four or five different versions before I got to her final look. I was browsing through a book of Czechoslovakian art, I think it was, and there was this figure of a virgin in a black robe. The way the robe was designed, the pattern of the material looked like flames.

"That was the studio's first widescreen feature. We had done *Toot, Whistle, Plank and Boom* in 1953 as a sort of experiment. We approached the widescreen thing [in terms of *Sleeping Beauty*] with many misgivings. I would talk to Walt about it, and he said, 'Just treat it like a moving illustration.' I worked on the first sequence, where Briar Rose is dancing with the animals and meets the prince in the woods. After Walt saw it, we began to realize that the stuff on either side should be visual, that we shouldn't use it for important action. We just forgot that it was widescreen after that, and animated it like any other film.

"There are things I don't like about the film—I felt many of the backgrounds were too busy—but by and large, it's a handsome film. Eyvind Earle did the backgrounds; they were certainly different. I wouldn't want to see another film done like that, but it gave it a sense of style."

101 Dalmatians (1961), directing animator: "I enjoyed it thoroughly. It's a film that doesn't have a single unnecessary scene—every scene works. An extraordinarily fine story job done by Bill Keith. I certainly enjoyed creating the character of Cruella de Vil; I did every bit of her in the finished film. I never did a model sheet, because there wasn't any point.

"I enjoyed her because she moved the story. She was also unlike any other Disney villain in that there was no magic involved—she was just flesh and blood. She was a little bit of everybody: Rosalind Russell, Tallulah Bankhead, Bette Davis. We used [*Father Dowling* character actress] Mary Wickes as a live-action model. Mary did some things that were very good: she's a pro and had good timing. She's a wonderful gal."

—Kyle Counts

Peter Pan Art: Copyright 1953 The Walt Disney Company

"*Peter Pan* is quite good," notes Davis, who designed Tinkerbell's final image.

RELUCTANT LEGEND

Gaines Photo: Sheelagh J. Wells

William Gaines, the luckiest man in comics, recalls EC's horrors & humors.

By JOE NAZZARO

At first glance, William Gaines hardly seems the stuff of which legends are made. His small Madison Avenue office is crammed with strange artifacts: zeppelins, elephants. A massive King Kong face glares in from a side window. Piles of books and magazines fill every available space, and the walls are covered with paintings of various EC horror characters—memories of a bygone era.

Gaines himself sits behind an old, meticulously neat wooden desk. With his shoulder-length silver hair and shaggy beard, he looks more like a mad scientist or college professor than a publishing genius, yet this man has carved out a place in comic book history not once, but twice. In the early '50s, Gaines' line of horror and suspense comics, such as *Tales from the Crypt*, *The Haunt of Fear* and *The Vault of Horror*, set a standard of storytelling rarely equalled. And he continues to publish *Mad*, which began as a 10-cent comic, grew into a slick magazine, and eventually became America's leading humor publication.

His career as a comics publisher began suddenly when his father Max was killed in a boating accident in 1947. "I was supposed to be a chemistry professor," reveals Gaines, who found himself thrust into the role of publisher. "What the hell was I doing there? I came down and started off by signing a few checks, and playing gin rummy with my cousin all day long. Little by little, I began to get interested."

Over the next few years, Gaines started introducing new titles into the Educational Comics line. Most of the new books were created with the help of a young artist named Al Feldstein, whom Gaines had hired after seeing his drawings of beautiful, bosomy women. With six new titles—love, crime and Western comics—under their belts, the two men decided to turn their attention to areas closer to Gaines' heart. "When I was a kid," says Gaines, "I read the horror and science fiction pulp magazines. When I became a publisher of comics, I went into what I had liked as a kid, and that was horror and science fiction."

Gaines and Feldstein created many of the early EC stories together, a partnership that the publisher recalls fondly. "The creative process was that I did a lot of reading, and as I read, I would get ideas and jot them down on a pad. I would amass these springboards, and almost every day when I went in, my first problem was to sell Al on a springboard. I might have to go through four or five before I got one he liked. Once I sold him on a springboard, we then blocked out the story very carefully. He would go into the other room and write it, and I would sit there with a nervous stomach, because once every 15 or 20 times, after

Photo: Aaron Rapoport

Publisher William Gaines thinks HBO's *Tales from the Crypt* is done "the way it *should* be done."

an hour, he would come bursting in saying, 'I can't write this!' and we would have to start all over."

For four days a week, Gaines and Feldstein wrote a story a day, editing and assembling books on the fifth. The pressures of creating a large volume of work within a short period of time forced the creators to establish a strict set of rules for writing their stories. "In those days," Gaines recalls, "we formulized everything. Virtually every EC comic was eight-seven-six-seven pages. We knew who would do the lead, depending on which comic it was. If it was *The Vault of Horror*, Johnny Craig did it. If it was *The Crypt of Terror* or *Tales from the Crypt*, Jack Davis drew it. If it was *The Haunt of Fear*, Graham Ingels. Jack Kamen always got the 'buster' stories; somewhere along the line, the wife says, 'OK, buster, let's so-and-so!' It was very formulized, but you *had* to have a formula then."

The stories were also written, Gaines observes, with particular EC artists in mind, each artist having his own specialty. "Graham Ingels was always good for stories that had walking corpses. If you look at his art, you can see the kind of stuff he was good at. Jack Davis was cleaner; action figures, action stories, and he was very fast. Jack Kamen was very precise. He would do very clean art, very pretty girls. He would do the stories about the girl double-crossing her husband. Johnny Craig did the same thing in *The Vault of Horror*. Basically, you could count on John to give you an eight-page story in *Vault of Horror* every other month, because it was a bi-monthly. He was very meticulous. We would always visualize the story for the artist, which was a rarity in those days. You had to have a small group to do that.

"They were all pros. It was a great crew, every damn one of them. The horror artists—Craig, Davis and Ingels—their work was unparalleled, and there were many other artists like Joe Orlando, Wally Wood, who was a great one for science fiction, Jack Kamen, who usually got the six-pagers because he was quite fast. It was like a little family. All the artists loved each other's work, and if one of them brought in his job and there were two or three artists there, they would go wild over it. There wasn't any jealousy. They were all different, and everybody worked more than they needed to for the money they were getting."

In 1953, the heyday of EC Comics began to draw to a close. The McCarthy era was in full swing, and the oppressive atmosphere that permeated America touched the comics industry. "The first problem was blacklisting," states Gaines, "by the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. This was designed mostly for Hollywood, and they nailed all these poor bastards. It wasn't bad enough that they had to confess what they did. Those who refused got in trouble as if they had been doing something wrong in the first place. It was a *vicious* business.

"The second thing was the McCarthy Hearings. This bastard [Senator Joseph McCarthy] was out making a name for himself, but his big boo-boo was to accuse the State Department of having all these Communists, and he was knocked out of the box on that because he was way out of line. He was censured by the Senate, and that was the end of him.

"Those hearings I was involved with were the Senate hearings on juvenile delinquency. They were attempting to demonstrate that comics caused juvenile delinquency. So, those were the three things going on at that time."

Upon learning the controversy his books were causing, Gaines' "first reaction was one of concern, because I figured sooner or later, they would nail me. By the time the Senate subcommittee got into the act, *everybody* was attacking comics: *Reader's Digest*, the newspapers, the Cincinnati Committee, and then, Fredric Wertham came out with this book [*Seduction of the Innocent*], which was just full of non-sequiturs, but people read it and believed him."

Gaines decided, on the advice of his business manager Lyle Stuart, that instead of waiting for the committee to contact him, *he* would contact the committee and offer to appear. "Lyle, when he first heard of this thing, wisely suggested that I write them a letter and ask to be invited to testify. I went in there a little more bravely than I might have if they had just dragged me in by the hair, which they did to all the other publishers."

Looking back on his testimony, is there anything that Gaines would have done differently? "I probably would have done it pretty much the same," he admits, "although it wound up as a catastrophe! I just went in, and I had written a preliminary speech, and then, I got the questions. I don't know what they had in mind, but they were attacking me in all directions. The one thing that put a tag line on the whole affair was when somebody held up a cover where we had this severed head.

"Johnny Craig had done this cover, and they asked, 'Is this in good taste?' I said, 'It's in good taste for a horror magazine,' and they asked, 'How would it have been in bad taste?' It was a stupid question, but I happened to have the answer. When the cover originally came in, there was blood dripping from the head, and I had Johnny raise the bottom of the page so that it covered the neck from which the blood was dripping. I said I supposed *that* would have been in bad taste, and that was very funny, and everybody was quoting this, that it would be in bad taste if blood had been dripping from the neck. You get into silly areas. 'When did you stop beating your wife?' It's difficult to answer these questions."

Photo: Bernard Fallon

Allowing Santa Claus in at the end of "And All Through the House" was the "punch" Gaines thought the *Crypt* episode should have.

As a result of the hearings, the publishers formed the Comics Magazine Association of America as well as the Comics Code Authority, a set of guidelines dictating the sort of material allowed in comics. Meanwhile, Gaines, forced to discontinue his horror and suspense books, released a set of "New Direction" titles which would be more appealing to his wholesalers. He refused to submit his books to the Code because he hated the implications of censorship, but his decision was to have dire consequences. The New Direction books were returned unsold by the wholesalers, as was a short-lived line of "Adult Picto-Fiction." Gaines had only one comic book left that continued to sell: a humor title called *Mad*.

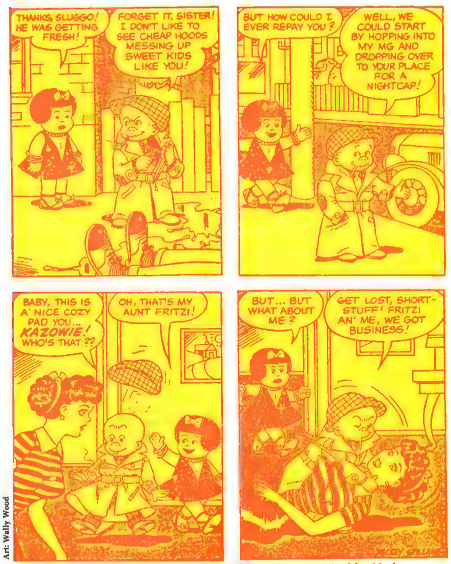
Art: Wally Wood

Wally Wood, who rendered this picture of Shakespeare as a comic-book writer, was "a very unhappy man," recalls Gaines.

While there are several conflicting stories concerning *Mad*'s beginnings, one thing is certain: its creation is directly linked to writer/artist Harvey Kurtzman (who discussed it in CS#16). "He walked in, thinking Educational Comics *were* educational," Gaines remembers, "and he thought he was going to get work doing educational comics. After we sat there and literally rolled on the floor looking at his stuff, we said, 'Mr. Kurtzman, this is *not* the kind of material we would be giving you,' but bearing that in mind, I said, 'We'll put him to work in science fiction and horror.' He wasn't happy there, and that's when I gave him *Two-Fisted Tales* to keep him out of my hair. It kept him busy on something in which I had no interest.

"In those days, I paid by the page or by the book. In the case of an editor, I would pay so much a book. Harvey was turning out two books to Al's seven, so he was making two-sevenths of what Al made. This made Harvey very unhappy, and I said, 'I don't know what I can do about it; you're just so bloody slow. But I do have a suggestion. I know that you're a humorist—you can knock out a humor book very quickly. There's no research, none of the nonsense you put into *Two-Fisted Tales*. Just slip one in between the other two books, you'll do three books instead of two, and your income will go up 50%.' Of course, Harvey being Harvey, he immediately got so engrossed in it, that he had to drop one of his other books just to get *Mad* out, so he was back where he started from. That's why there's a *Mad*: so that Harvey's income could go up, which didn't work out."

Mad debuted in 1952, and while it featured some hilarious satires written by Kurtzman, and illustrated by Jack Davis, Wally Wood, John Severin and Will Elder, it was not an immediate success. It wasn't until #4, which featured a parody of Superman, that the book caught fire. Sales began to climb, and dozens of *Mad* imitations flooded the newsstands.


NANCY
THANKS, SLUGGO! HE WAS GETTING FRESH!
FORGET IT, SISTER! I DON'T LIKE TO SEE CHEAP HOODS MESSING UP SWEET KIDS LIKE YOU!
BUT HOW COULD I EVER REPAY YOU?
WELL, WE COULD START BY HOPPING INTO MY MG AND DROPPING OVER TO YOUR PLACE FOR A NIGHTCAP!
BABY, THIS IS A NICE COZY PAD YOU, KAZOWIE! WHO'S THAT??
OH, THAT'S MY AUNT FRITZI!
BUT... BUT WHAT ABOUT ME?
GET LOST, SHORT-STUFF! FRITZI AN' ME, WE GOT BUSINESS!
Art: Wally Wood

Even comic strips such as *Nancy* weren't safe from being satirized by *Mad*.

DICK NIXON IN WASHINGTON

I'M HOME, PAT...
HOW DID THINGS GO ON CAPITOL HILL TODAY, DEAR?
MAN, I HAD A ROUGH MORNING IN THE SENATE! THAT LYNDON JOHNSON KEEPS PICKING ON ME!
OH, DICK, I WISH (SIGH!) YOU'D GET OUT OF POLITICS! I'M SO SICK OF WEARING CLOTH COATS!

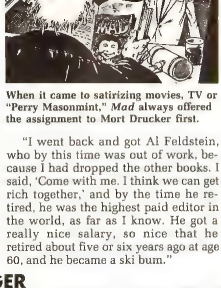
Art: Wally Wood

The McCarthy era put Gaines and EC Comics in the hot seat, but that didn't stop the publisher from putting out *Mad*.

Unfortunately, Kurtzman's involvement with *Mad* ended in 1955. "What happened," Gaines recounts, "is that Harvey was given a very lucrative offer by either *Pageant* or *Coronet* Magazine. The editor recognized Harvey's talent and made him an offer of 24 or 32 pages in the magazine that would be his every month. It was a very fine offer and I couldn't counter it with money. Sales had been bad, so the only way I could get Harvey to stay was to offer him the opportunity of turning *Mad* from a 10-cent comic into a slick magazine. Now, Harvey had approached me with the idea prior to this, and I said, 'Not a chance! I'm a comics publisher; I don't know anything about magazines,' but I reversed myself. I figured this might bring him back and it did. He was so enthralled with the idea that he stayed with *Mad* and turned it into a magazine. He stayed with me for four issues.

"Meanwhile, he apparently got a very lucrative offer from Hugh Hefner and *Playboy*, which ultimately resulted in 'Little Annie Fanny.' I didn't know that, but he came to me and said, 'I'm going to leave *Mad* unless I get control of it.' Up until now, he had been an employee, and I said, 'What do you mean, "control"—51 percent of the stock?' and he said yes. I said, 'Come on. Harvey, you want me to give you half the magazine?' and he said, 'That's the only basis under which I'll stay.' I said, 'Goodbye, Harvey.' He said, 'You'll be sorry,' and I said, 'Goodbye, Harvey.' He said, 'You'd better think about it,' and I said, 'I thought about it. Goodbye, Harvey.' That's precisely the whole story of how *Mad* started and how it ended with Harvey.

Art: Mort Drucker


They're all fine, Perry! And what does the State intend to prove in this case?
Not much, your honor! I think I got an overtime parking charge here I might make stick!
Then we'll proceed!

When it came to satirizing movies, TV or "Perry Masonmint," *Mad* always offered the assignment to Mort Drucker first.

"I went back and got Al Feldstein, who by this time was out of work, because I had dropped the other books. I said, 'Come with me. I think we can get rich together,' and by the time he retired, he was the highest paid editor in the world, as far as I know. He got a really nice salary, so nice that he retired about five or six years ago at age 60, and he became a ski bum."

How did Feldstein's style of writing differ from Kurtzman's? "After we got a plot, Al would go in and write it directly onto the drawing board," remembers Gaines. "He would rule up the boards into the seven panels, and he would just start writing. As you probably remember, we used Leroy lettering as opposed to freehand, so the letterer would simply line it up, and do it just as Al wrote it, 3/4 of an inch above it. That was what the artist would get: a board with panels ruled, the letters lettered in. And our guys were such pros that you didn't really have to tell them what was in each panel. They followed the story. They would bring in the finished job and that was it.

"Harvey, on the other hand, would not only break the thing down into panels, he would pencil in the lettering, he roughed in the pencils for each panel, he would show them to the artist, and probably the artist would have to bring them back, show him the pencils, and Harvey would go over the pencils panel-by-panel with the guy. Most of the artists weren't that upset by it, but to work with Harvey, that's what you had to do."

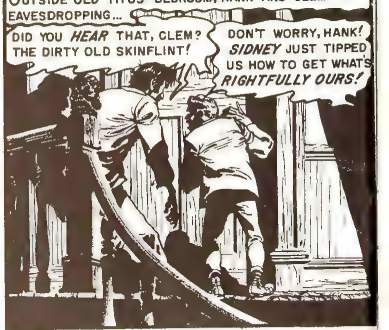
One thing that hasn't changed about *Mad* is that stories are still being written with *specific* artists in mind. "With things like movies or TV," Gaines explains, "it would first go to Mort Drucker. Drucker can only do so much, so next it goes to Angelo Torres. If either of them is unable to handle it, there are two or three others we would throw it to. Drucker is number one with that kind of thing. Nobody can do caricatures like he can."

Gaines is understandably proud of the fact that *Mad* writers are paid the same rates as the artists, a policy that he instituted several years ago. "I still say to this day that the scriptwriter is the most important thing to *any* entertainment business, be it movies, TV, comics, anything. If you don't have a good story, you have *nothing*.

Mad Magazine depicts the strong bond between the Lone Ranger and Tonto.

THE LONE RANGER

All Mad Art: Copyright 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1961, 1962, 1975 E.C. Publications, Inc.


EAVESDROPPING...
DID YOU HEAR THAT, CLEM? THE DIRTY OLD SKINFLINT!
DON'T WORRY, HANK! SIDNEY JUST TIPPED US HOW TO GET WHAT'S RIGHTFULLY OURS!

Graham Ingels was "a dear, sweet, quiet, gentle person," recalls Gaines, "although you would never know it from his artwork."

"When I came into the business, a script was about six bucks a page, and the art was $23. Little by little, I kept raising the writing until I got it up to parity. I don't know if anybody has followed me yet."

Over the years, a number of EC-based projects have made their way to the big and small screens. While Gaines has tried to retain some control over these projects, most of them haven't turned out to his satisfaction.

Quizzed about *Up the Academy*, a film that was supposed to be *Mad*'s answer to *National Lampoon's Animal House*, for example, a look of obvious annoyance crosses Gaines' face. "Two very talented scriptwriters had written it, but it was really too adult for *Mad*. It had a lot of filthy parts in it, turds in the punch bowl, and all kinds of disgusting things. We read it and said, 'Well, it has possibilities.' I took the script and removed certain parts, and the deal was that they had to change the script and fix it so it wasn't revolting. They promised to do it, of course, but this was Warner Bros. who owned it [Warner had already bought *Mad*], so when they screwed me completely, what was I going to do—sue *them*? I thought of it as, 'How can you sue your father?'

"The worst we could do was to write a lampoon about it and warn our readers *not* to go near it, because it was awful. What else could we do? Al and I went out there for a screening, and we were sick. On the way home, I said, 'I can fix Ronson lighters. Can you drive taxi cabs? That's the end of *Mad*. When that thing opens, we're finished!' "

While the film didn't destroy the magazine, the failure of *Up the Academy* has prevented Gaines from doing the "real" *Mad* movie. "Oh, absolutely! It did so badly that the exhibitors were disgusted, and when Warner Bros. had the idea of doing a *Mad* movie, everyone said, 'a *Mad* movie? We just had a *Mad* movie and it bombed!' That was the end of that."

As for the two Amicus films from the early '70s, *Tales from the Crypt* and *The Vault of Horror*, Gaines has little to say. "Somebody walked in and they wanted to do them," he comments. "My big fight was that I was supposed to have script approval. After the first one, which was successful, and the second one, which wasn't, I refused to do any more films with them. That was the end of that until [producer] Joel Silver came to me."

He's much happier with HBO's big-budget *Tales from the Crypt* anthology series, which has not only managed to attract some of Hollywood's finest talent, but has also received a number of cable's ACE Awards. As Gaines recalls, the TV version of *Tales from the Crypt* originally seemed to be another project destined for oblivion.

"This guy Silver came in here years ago and made a deal for a *Tales from*

Art: Al Feldstein

Al Feldstein was "extremely able," says Gaines, but "he *never* had his heart in his work."

the Crypt movie, but years went by and the movie never got made. He kept buying the options, and finally, he came in and said, 'Look, I can't do the movie, but I want to make a TV show out of it.' We changed the contracts, and a couple more years went by, because he was busy with a million other projects [i.e. *Predator, Die Hard* and others]. Finally, he got to it, and I think he has done an incredible job."

Gaines is acting as a creative consultant on *Crypt*, and is glad that for once, the producers are listening to his suggestions. "They send me every script, and I go over it to make sure that it follows the original story within reason. I have made some suggestions which they generally take. For example, the first story was the Santa Claus one ["And All Through the House"]. I pointed out to them that the 'punch' was to let Santa Claus in, and the woman starts screaming. You don't have Santa Claus start chasing the woman, which is what they had, so they changed it."

Overall, Gaines is happy with the way the series turned out. "Oh, yes! The British pictures didn't use the Crypt Keeper at all, but Silver does it the way it *should* be done. He has a Crypt Keeper, a crypt, and a fantastic opening sequence I never get tired of looking at. He has just done a wonderful job, and I'm very happy with it."

Tales from the Crypt fans will be happy to hear that the series' success may lead to future EC projects. "[Silver] came back with a large chunk of money," Gaines reveals, "and he brought the rights to almost everything else I published, including the science fiction. The only thing he couldn't get was the title *Weird Science*, which I had already sold [for the John Hughes film] but I sold him *all* the stories, all the comic book stuff, even the New Direction stuff. I don't know what they're going to do with it, but they wanted everything.

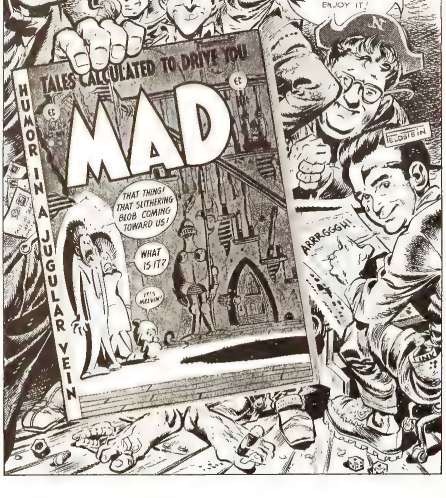
"I have a deal with him where if he doesn't do a science fiction series within two years of my contract, I get it all back. Silver didn't want to do science fiction, but I wanted him to have it because that's my love. There are so many things they could do with the science fiction stories, but so far, he hasn't done it. I don't care, because after a few years, I'll get it back."

Also in development is a possible *Two-Fisted Tales* series for Fox Television; Gaines is less certain about that show's future. "They had been trying to do it for Fox, but I'm really not up on it, because they haven't called me for a long time. Every once in a while, I get scripts to OK for *Two-Fisted Tales*. They don't want to use the stuff that Harvey did; I don't know why. For example, they took a Reed Crandall story from *Shock Suspen-Stories*, and they wanted to use it in the series. I said, 'What are you doing? This isn't a *Two-Fisted Tales* story!' They said, 'Well, we think it would make a good story,' but this is for network, and it's a rough story. You can do anything you want on HBO, but even Fox can only go so far. Anyway, the last I heard, they changed their minds, or Fox didn't like it. I really don't know what's happening."

Looking back on his time in comics, Gaines is quick to point out that much of his success is due to the gifted people who've worked for him over the years. "I have always said, and I honestly believe this, I have been the *luckiest* guy who ever got into comics," he maintains. "I have managed to surround myself with complete and utter talent, and I have done it not once but twice. The whole EC group was tremendously talented, and the *Mad* group is equally talented. Almost everybody is new and different, and although I'm still in touch with the old guys, I don't often see them, but I still love them."

Asked to comment about his former staffers, Gaines smiles. "You name the people." Al Feldstein? "Al is an extremely capable person, but what you have to understand is that he *never* had his heart in his work. I could explain Al by saying that if I had been in the door knocker business, and Al had been running the business for me, I would have the best goddamned doorknobs that were ever made. Whatever he did, he did well, but when he left *Mad*, he never looked back and had no nostalgia for it, which shocked and amazed me. He really left and never looked back. Other than that, he was extremely able and very personable."

According to Gaines, *Mad* Magazine was started "so Harvey's [Kurtzman] income could go up."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ARRGGGH!
BLECH!
WOULD
HOSTESS

Art: Jack Davis Mad #4, Frontline Combat, Youth of Horror Art. Copyright 1982, 1985 William M. Gaines

Art: Jack Davis

The publisher describes Jack Davis as an artist whose talent "drips from his fingers, and fast."

Will Elder? "He was the craziest maniac that anybody ever ran across. He was a very nice, very funny man. As soon as you were with him, he would keep you in stitches.

"My first thought of Elder is the Halloween party we had at Kurtzman's house, where Elder brought his wife as a mummy. She was all wrapped up and couldn't sit down."

Wally Wood? "Wally was a mischievous pixie, a delight, but a very unhappy man. As you know, he did away with himself. He was extremely talented, probably EC's number one science fiction artist, and maybe the world's. The saddest thing that ever happened to Wally was that he broke up with his first wife, and that was his undoing, because he needed somebody strong to help give him direction.'

Graham Ingels? "A dear, sweet, quiet, gentle person, although you would never know it from his artwork," says Gaines. "He was an alcoholic; he isn't one anymore. I would give him a job and Graham would normally take two weeks on it. If he came in later, I knew he was on a bender somewhere. He would get so drunk that he didn't know where he was for a week or so, but he never lost the artwork, and he never brought it back dirty or muddy. He always finished it, although sometimes late.

"Graham ran away from home, and for a long time, we didn't know where he was. He was hiding from his wife, and to my knowledge, she *still* doesn't know where he is, but I send him money. The first time, he called me up and said, 'I don't want this!' I said, 'Graham, don't screw up my books. Take the money, and if you don't want it, give it to charity, but take it.' Over the years, he decided to keep it, and once in a while, he'll say, 'Thanks for that chunk of money, because there was an operation I had to have,' so he has come around. He's still not proud of what he did, which is so sad because people adore this man. They worship his art."

Jack Davis? "He is a sweet, wonderful guy who never grew up. He never went to school, but talent drips from his fingers, and fast! We used to kid him about that, but if you needed a job in three days, he would get it out. He still can, but his problem is that he has 300 other jobs. He does a lot of advertising work and magazine covers, and he's always loaded down with work. He moved next to a golf course in Atlanta, so that he could play all day. He just never grew up."

And what of the man who assembled this unique group of individuals into a ground-breaking company? "Oh, the only thing I've had is *luck*," he insists. "It's not *my* talent; it's the talent of my staffs. The only talent I have is getting a good staff together."

So, what role has this reluctant legend had in the comics business? William Gaines smiles again. "My role has been getting guys together who could produce, and keeping them relatively happy." (65)

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DIRECTING ROCKETEER

All Rocketeer FX Composite Photos. Copyright 1991 IEM

It took filmmaker Joe Johnston to make this comics hero fly.

By MARC SHAPIRO

I went into *The Rocketeer* thinking, 'Oh, my God!' " explains director Joe Johnston in his trademark matter-of-fact voice. "I was thinking, 'I've got 75 speaking parts and 76 days to shoot this. What kind of ego problems am I going to have? Who's going to want to hide out in their trailer until they're called?' "

Johnston is expressing those early fears, and the fact that none of them came to pass, in his office on the Disney Studio lot. It's a week before *The Rocketeer* opens in theaters, and not too far removed from its arduous post-production process. And Joe Johnston is tired.

"Right now, all I can think about is disappearing into the desert for a couple of months. The summer and fall are going to be a vacation. The way I feel right now, I may *never* work again. I say that now, but I'm sure after a while I'll start getting antsy."

Director Joe Johnston (center) hopes audiences will see *The Rocketeer* as more than "a comic-book movie."

The director, who previously helmed *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* (STARLOG YEARBOOK #6), wasn't unfamiliar with Dave Stevens' high-flying creation. He began reading *The Rocketeer* (the only comic book he admits to being a fan of) in 1982.

"I remember the first time I picked up the comic," he relates. "I liked the characters and the period, but the one thing that really struck home was that Dave Stevens really cared about what he was doing. Each panel was done with this sense of professionalism that really impressed me."

Johnston's ongoing interest in *The Rocketeer* took a professional turn soon after *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* premiered.

"I had signed one of those standard three-picture deals after *Honey*, and all I was getting from Disney was a bunch of scripts just like that one. I wasn't really interested in what they were sending me, so I was turning down a lot of stuff. That's when I became interested in *The Rocketeer* again and asked my agent to track down whoever owned the film rights to it. In 1982, I couldn't take *The*

All Rocketeer Photos: Copyright 1991 The Walt Disney Company

Rocketeer to a studio, tell them 'I would like to make this into a movie and would you give me 30 million bucks?' But, I felt the timing might be right now.

"My agent called me back and said, 'I've got a surprise for you: Disney has had the rights to *The Rocketeer* for four years.' So, I called the studio and told them I would do *The Rocketeer*."

It wasn't exactly as easy as all that, however. *The Rocketeer* project (see CS #2, 18, 19 & 20) had passed through several hands (some of them more than once) since falling under the Disney option. And some were a bit leery of yet another new face on *The Rocketeer*'s landing strip.

"When I first came onto the project, I knew there was a lot of ice I had to break with the writers [Danny Bilson and Paul De Meo] and the people at Disney. All I could do was tell them the film I wanted to make. After a while, we all realized that we were pretty much in agreement as to what *The Rocketeer* should be."

Johnston most assuredly didn't want to make a comic-book movie out of this comic book. "There will always be people who'll see this as a comic-book movie," he explains. "I didn't want to just take a comic and translate it to the screen. I wanted it to have depth of character, believable situations and a strong sense of being real; elements that a comic book could *never* have. I wanted to acknowledge the origins of *The Rocketeer* as a comic book, but it was important that the movie become something else."

Consequently, the director, although basically happy with the Bilson/De Meo script, did have some "problems" with it.

"I felt it was a bit too much like a comic book, in the sense that people tended to overstate the obvious. Bilson and De Meo were receptive to my ideas on how I wanted to change things around."

So was *Rocketeer* creator Dave Stevens. "Dave had many ideas and input into what was going on, and I *always* wanted to hear them," says

The director thought Bill Campbell was "the perfect choice" as Cliff, but originally doubted casting [illegible] as Peevy.

All Rocketeer Scene Photos: Ron Batzdorff

Timothy Dalton, seen here trying to bond with Jennifer Connelly, "plays a better bad guy than a good guy with that sly fox face of his," notes Johnston.

Johnston. "He knew his Rocketeer was undergoing a transformation to a whole other medium and that his baby was about to become *my* baby, so he respected what I was doing."

Johnston's "baby" soon began the trial by casting. The director thought *The Rocketeer* should "be a virtual unknown." It was, he remembers, an idea that was "the first of my big battles with the studio."

"Disney wanted somebody who was extremely well-known; they wanted Tom Cruise. I immediately cringed. I felt Cruise would have been great, but I also felt he would have brought a lot of baggage along with him. I wanted somebody who could approach the role without *any* baggage. Somebody the audience would say, 'Who the hell is that?', then sit back and let him prove himself. I felt Bill Campbell was the perfect choice.

"Once I met Jennifer (Connelly), I knew she was the person I wanted for Jenny," he continues. "The minute she read for me, I knew she was it. I just had to convince the studio that she was, and, eventually, I did."

The director had little trouble persuading Disney that Timothy Dalton should play the villain. "He was a great choice. I believe he plays a better bad guy than a good guy with that sly fox face of his." Johnston questioned his own judgment, however, about casting Alan Arkin as Peevy.

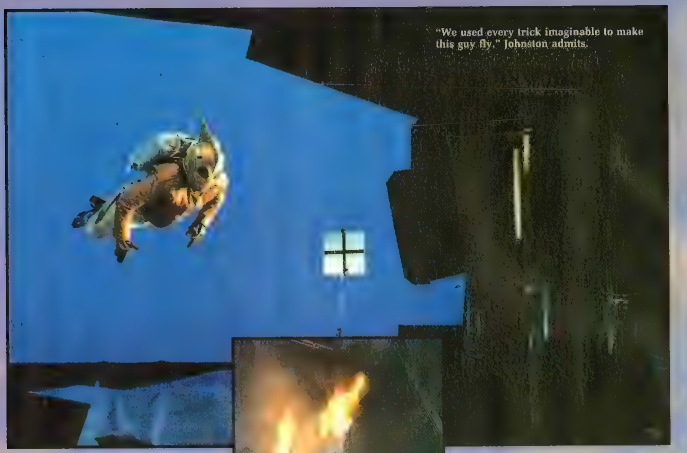
"At first, I felt Alan Arkin was a strange choice," he admits. "I wasn't absolutely convinced he was right for the part, but I went ahead and cast him anyway. It wasn't until we were halfway through production and I was seeing the scenes cut together that I realized he was bringing more to his role than had ever been written."

Johnston believes his special FX background proved an advantage in his approach to directing *The Rocketeer*, the main reason being that he was able to let go of that element and concentrate on other facets of filmmaking.

"Directors who don't understand special FX tend to hang onto them with a death grip," he says. "It's their fear of not knowing what's going on and how things are going to turn out. I was confident, because of my background, that *The Rocketeer*'s FX people were doing the best possible job they could and that I didn't have to worry about it."

Johnston's FX side did surface when it came to preparing for *The Rocketeer*'s flying sequences.

"We storyboarded every shot in every scene. Each sequence was storyboarded at least five times, with shots added and taken away each time. This went on for four months, so by the time we got to Santa Maria and started shooting, we knew where



"We used every trick imaginable to make this guy fly," Johnston admits.

every element of every sequence was going to fit in."

Once filming of the flying sequences actually began, the director discovered that, from his perch in a tower overlooking the field where stunt pilots captured the necessary footage, he could open things up a little.

"I met with the pilots and cameramen each day, before they took off, and showed them on paper exactly what shots I wanted. I also told them that once they got what I needed, they could go wild and shoot any kind of stunt footage they wanted, as long as they kept the camera direction consistent with what I had asked for."

Photo: Stan Comey

The director wants to avoid making only FX-oriented films, but doesn't mind blowing up a zeppelin to "sell the story."

Johnston's well-ordered universe received its first shock soon after lensing of the flying sequences began. The problem? Not much, really. Just the director discovering that the star of his cinematic air show was afraid to fly.

"Bill didn't tell me he had a fear of flying until we got him into the plane's cockpit and were ready to shoot his footage that first day," groans Johnston at the memory. "Believe me, that was a little disconcerting to hear. What Bill told me is that, prior to filming, he had rented a bi-plane, had the pilot take him up and do dives, rolls and loops in an attempt to get him used to things he would have to do on camera.

"I told him that if he really had a problem with it, we could find some other way to get his shots, but he insisted that he could get through it. So, we sent him up with the camera. He was basically acting as his own camera operator, shooting his own reaction shots. I know he didn't feel real great about what he was doing, but when you see him on screen, Bill looks like the most natural pilot in the world."

The director's other vivid *Rocketeer* memories center on the flying suit and the challenges of making this rocket man hero fly.

"We used just about every trick imaginable to make this guy fly. We had a full-sized jet pack that shot out a 30-foot flame, and, depending on the scene, supplemented the full-sized model with puppet stop-motion animation, stuntmen on a copter skid, stuntmen hanging from wires and blue screen. The challenge was to make *all* this stuff cut together and have it look like the same guy all the way through."

The care and control exercised by Johnston on the aerial sequences carried over to the film's earthbound soundstage sequences. There were few problems creating the movie's period feel.

"Shooting 1930s wasn't difficult," he says. "It all boiled down to being *very* careful about controlling things like costumes and props. I did that by hiring people I could trust to exercise that control for me.

"I like big movies and having to shoot scenes with 100 extras and 40 period cars," he adds, "which is why I found the movie-within-a-movie sequences so much fun to do. It was like we were making *Robin Hood*. We shot that entire sequence at 21 frames per second, just to give it that extra look of energy."

Particular scenes in *The Rocketeer* are a blur to the director at this point, and he can only pick out bits and pieces of things that jog his memory.

"Putting Bill and Jennifer through the stunts on the zeppelin mock-up was exciting," he recalls. "They were

(continued on page 60)

CLIFFHANGER QUEEN

Shazam! Captain Marvel has always been Louise Currie's hero.

By TOM WEAVER

I can't believe it sometimes, but it seems as though *Adventures of Captain Marvel* just isn't *ever* going to lose its appeal," actress Louise Currie, who co-starred in Republic's 1941 serial based on Fawcett's Whiz Comics character, admits. "Recently, a fan named Sidney Hart called me; he's a third grade schoolteacher from the South, and he said that he got amazing results with his class when he ran *Captain Marvel* first thing every morning. When the children would come into the room, he would turn on one chapter. Of course, they would be all settled down and he would have their *rapt* attention by the time the chapter would finish, and then he would go into the lessons. They couldn't *wait* to get to his class every day, and he would get perfect attendance! He told me he had the best luck of his teaching career when he was using *Captain Marvel* to keep the children in line!" she laughs.

Born in Oklahoma City, she attended New York's Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, became interested in acting and then attended Max Reinhardt's drama school in Hollywood. Talent scouts spotted her in the acting workshop's stage productions and eventually she signed with agent Sue Carol, Alan Ladd's wife.

Currie's first movie (although not the first released) was *The Pinto Kid*, a 1941 Columbia B Western with Charles Starrett. *Variety* dubbed screen newcomer Currie "a neat looker."

Another early role was a small but highly visible part as one of several debutantes in the song-filled mystery/comedy *You'll Find Out* (RKO, 1940). Comic bandleader Kay Kyser and his College of Musical Knowledge were the film's stars, and providing the menace were Hollywood's top three bogeymen—Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi and Peter Lorre.

"I appeared with Bela Lugosi three times. He was so different from the characters he played," says Currie. "He was quiet and unassuming off-screen, very studious and sedate. Then, the cameras would roll and he would be a *horrible* man!

"Boris Karloff I remember, too, but not as specifically as Lugosi, because I played with Lugosi so much more. I remember talking with Karloff, and it seemed to me that he was also quite intelligent. He was actually a very nice-looking man, so to find him always in such weird parts was unusual! And Peter Lorre was very small and very...*peculiar*. Maybe his roles are more vivid in my mind than his actual personality, but I think he was a little weird in person!"

While Karloff, Lugosi and Lorre dished out their evil deeds in *You'll Find Out* a soundstage or two away, movie history was being made as 25-year-old Orson Welles gathered his Mercury Players together for their joint motion picture debut *Citizen Kane*. Currie and Alan Ladd were

Captain Marvel Serial Character: Copyright 1941 Fawcett Publications

Louise Currie remembers Tom Tyler as being "nice and cooperative" to work with on *Adventures of Captain Marvel*.

among the reporters discussing the life and times of the Hearst-like Kane (Welles) in the film's classic climax; Currie even delivers the one line that perhaps best encapsulates the entire film. ("If you could have found out what 'Rosebud' meant, I bet that would have explained everything.")

"I remember being on that picture a long, long time, to do a sequence that seems so inconsequential," Currie says. "By the time they got through with it in the cutting room, there wasn't much left of the scene, but I think we were on that several months, which was amazing. It's quite a contrast to the work I had been doing, where I would make a movie in 10 days or something!

"*Citizen Kane* went on and on and on and *on*, but it was a very educational, interesting experience. We watched Orson Welles work. His direction was remarkable and quite unusual. He would get way up on the camera boom and decide how to angle his shots. He was a very demanding director; everything had to be done precisely his way. And he wasn't very patient unless you knew what you were doing."

All Captain Marvel Photos: Copyright 1941 Republic Pictures

Of course, her minute role in *Citizen Kane* remains just a footnote in Currie's career; her enduring claim to fame remains *Adventures of Captain Marvel*, Republic's 12-chapter serial.

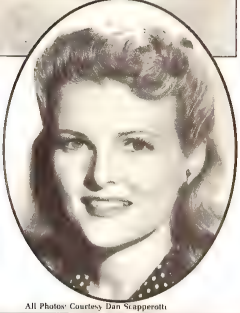
"Serials were something that youngsters in those days would watch religiously every Saturday," she recalls. "I remember my own son going every weekend to the movie theater in Westwood Village. That was something that all the neighborhood children did as a regular routine. When I was offered *Captain Marvel*, I thought it would be fun to try, just to see what it would be like. At that time, not being under contract, I just accepted whatever I felt might be interesting and worthwhile doing. And I ended up doing *two* serials, *Adventures of Captain Marvel* and *The Masked Marvel*."

The origin of Republic's Captain Marvel differed from the comics source. In both, the caped superhero was the other identity of Billy Batson, but in the comic book (*Whiz Comics* #2, February 1940), Batson was a newsboy who encountered the mystical Shazam in an abandoned subway tunnel; invoking Shazam's name changed the wispy lad into the muscle-bound, bullet-proof champion of justice, Captain Marvel. A quintet of Republic screenwriters overhauled the comic-book premise, depicting Batson (Frank Coghlan, Jr.) as a boyish radio newscaster (Billy's eventual vocation in the comics) accompanying the Malcolm Archaeological Expedition into a remote and volcanic section of Siam. There, the party discovers a secret underground tomb where Batson, exploring alone, encounters Shazam (Nigel de Brulier). The old sage bestows upon Batson the ability to transform himself at will into the World's Mightiest Mortal (Tom Tyler).

Ape Man Photo: Copyright 1943 Monogram Pictures.

When Currie's son saw her in *The Ape Man*, "for many years, he had dreams of the ape [Bela Lugosi] capturing his mother!"

Elsewhere, the remaining expedition members, accompanied by secretary Betty (Currie) and Batson's sidekick Whitey (Billy Benedict), have uncovered the tomb's greatest treasure: A large golden model of a scorpion holding five lenses in its claws. Directing sunlight through the lenses changes base metals into gold. Realizing its incredible value, the scientists divide the lenses and the scorpion model amongst themselves for safekeeping. One of them, however, takes on the second identity of the Scorpion, a hooded and robed super-



All Photos: Courtesy Dan Scapperotti

Currie worked in serials such as *Captain Marvel* because "you never got bored."

criminal who schemes to divest his former colleagues of their lenses. First in Siam, later in America and, finally, once again in Siam, Batson/Captain Marvel battles the Scorpion and his henchmen, striving stoically to unmask the hooded fiend before the complete golden scorpion—and its destructive capabilities—are in his hands.

Captain Marvel's plot was a perfect framework for action and suspense, and the Republic special FX and stunt teams operated at peak efficiency to cram the 12 episodes with unparalleled serial thrills. Recalls Currie, "The special FX men on *Captain Marvel* [Howard and Theodore Lydecker] were sensational; in fact, they were considered the best in the business at that time. They just did a fabulous job, especially with the flying dummy of Captain Marvel. I remember watching it in flight and being absolutely enthralled by the fact that they could do that. But the really interesting part was watching the stunt people work—they were brilliant.

"A stuntman named Dave Sharpe doubled for me—amazingly!" she laughs. "He was a smallish man, but very, very versatile and marvelous with his timing. Of course, I was there to watch them put on some of those big fight scenes we had in every chapter, but I didn't really like watching all that! They were remarkable, the way they could do it."

Actress Louise Currie is "delighted" that *Adventures of Captain Marvel* is considered one of the best serials ever made.

The actress enjoyed her role in *The Masked Marvel*. "I had a part that was a little more normal."

All Masked Marvel Photos: Copyright 1943 Republic Pictures

The hectic production pace of *Captain Marvel*—and of serials in general—presented no problem for Currie, who admits that she much *preferred* working that way. "Fortunately, I had enough training that I could do my scenes and not mess them up, not muff the lines. I thought that was more stimulating and interesting than pictures like *Citizen Kane*, where you just sat on a set for endless hours doing *nothing*, which to me was just a trial and a bore. So, I enjoyed the activity, and the fact that you could do something quickly, do it well and have it finished—in fact, I rather *liked* that. I'm sure that most of the people that *started* with big A productions would never have understood that, or been able to cope with it.

"*Captain Marvel* even had two directors [William Witney and John English], which was done, I'm sure, to save time and budget [costs]," she continues. "The one who wasn't directing on a particular day could be studying what they were going to do next, or he could be off shooting on another location. That helped them facilitate the thing and make it all run faster. They were young, spirited and eager to do a good job.

"I believe I remember seeing the whole script at once at one point, but they were very innovative in those days and would constantly change things! You might *think* you were going to do one thing on a certain day, but they would have you do 16 others! So, you had to be very fast, willing and ready just to go with whatever they happened to dream up."

At Chapter 1's conclusion, the expedition members are fleeing in their cars from an angry horde of mounted natives, one of whom has mined a chasm-spanning bridge with dynamite. The charge is detonated as the car containing Betty and Whitey crosses the bridge, and the vehicle hurtles down into the river far below [an outstanding Lydecker miniature]. Being expected now to climb *inside* the submerged vehicle was an unpleasant surprise for Currie.

"The station wagon was in the water, and I was supposed to get inside so that Captain Marvel could drag me out and rescue me," she explains. "I said to them, 'Uhn-uh. I'm not going down in that cold water, underneath a car, and wonder when I'm going to get out!' Well, that caused a little bit of discussion, but I stuck to my guns and refused to do it. It was beyond my capabilities—I studied acting, not stuntwork! So, they acquiesced, and found some women's clothes for Dave Sharpe to get into. Dave ended up do-

"There was really no acting on my part [in *Captain Marvel*]," admits Currie. "I was just there, being acted *upon*."

ing that stunt for me; once Captain Marvel carried Dave to shore, they went to a close-up of me reviving."

Currie's anecdote has an interesting, and revealing, epilogue. "Years later, at a dinner party, I ran into one of the directors of *Captain Marvel*—I can't remember if it was Jack English or Bill Witney. I asked him, 'You can tell me now: How did you feel when I refused to do that stunt?' He said, 'Well, we didn't *like* it, but you were absolutely in the right when you refused to do it.' Everything was *so* fast and furious, you took *enough* chances in a serial without doing things that were just plain dangerous like that. And the way I kept getting knocked out throughout [the serial], every time Billy Batson is about to say 'Shazam!' and change into Captain Marvel—I don't know how they thought of so many ways of almost destroying me! I was always getting knocked out; boards falling from the ceiling onto my head and everything—I look back at it and wonder *how* I did it! At the time, you don't even realize it. That was the fun thing about doing [serials], the fast action—you never got bored."

Part of the fun was working alongside her youthful *Captain Marvel* co-stars, Frank Coghlan (Batson) and Billy Benedict (Whitey). "They couldn't have been more pleasant," she states emphatically. "I still talk to them from time to time; in fact, Frank and Billy were very, very cooperative and wonderful to work with. They both knew their trade and what they were doing, and it made working under those conditions much easier."

Tom Tyler, a cowboy star in a raft of B Westerns (and a supporting player in bigger productions like *Stagecoach*), was ideally cast as Captain Marvel. The husky Tyler made for a unique superhero, one who combatted criminals with a steely determination and showed no quarter to his defeated enemies; the serial's most notorious scene depicts Captain Marvel machine-gunning a pair of renegade natives in the back.

Recalling the actor, Currie says, "Tom Tyler was very quiet and sort of reserved; whereas Billy and Frank were young, fun and full of enthusiasm, it seemed to me that Tom was very retiring. I don't remember talking with him much, but working with him, he was very nice and cooperative."

She has seen *Adventures of Captain Marvel* again in recent years, and "I really enjoy it. It really holds your attention, and the cliffhanger endings are still exciting. Each chapter has a great deal of tension at the end. I don't know how they were able to think up so many ways to be that suspenseful!"

Asked to rate her own performance in it, Currie's enthusiasm wanes a bit. "Well, there was really very *little* performance—I was just there, being acted *upon*! There really *was* no acting on my part, and I don't feel that I was able to portray anything."

Currie's fans would disagree, of course, and apparently so did her bosses. Two years later, she was once again selected to star in a Republic chapterplay starring a different Marvel—Tom Steele as *The Masked Marvel*. A big-city crimefighter who kept his identity a closely-guarded secret, the Masked Marvel squared off against Mura Sakima (Johnny Arthur), a Japanese spy/saboteur, in this wartime-era serial. Currie played Alice Hamilton, daughter of an insurance company executive murdered by Sakima's men. The role allowed the actress more screen time and a greater share of the action, a new arrangement she greatly preferred. "As far as my character was concerned, *Captain Marvel* was just running and screaming, or getting knocked out and being unconscious! I was more myself in *The Masked Marvel*; I had a part that was a little more normal."

Another unique chapterplay, *The Masked Marvel* kept secret the true identity of its *hero* rather than its villain: Until Chapter 12's end, audiences didn't know which of four young insurance investigators (Rod Bacon, Richard Clarke, David Bacon and Bill Healy) would turn out to be the Marvel (actually played throughout by stuntman Steele). The cast was equally in the dark.

"Funnily enough, they kept the ending so secret that, even while we were shooting it, none of *us* knew who was going to be the Masked Marvel!" she remembers. "They wanted it to be such a secret, such a surprise—apparently even for *us*! The four investigators were played by a group of interesting young men who were all starting their careers. All of them were attractive, talented and nice."

As for Johnny Arthur's performance as a Japanese spy, "Well, he was very ominous, wasn't he?" she laughs. "But I'm sure the *Japanese* probably wouldn't have thought too much of his portrayal! And Tom

(continued on page 58)

Mental Mysteries

James Hudnall plots a world filled with conspiracies, death & psychos.

By MICHAEL HERRY

James D. Hudnall considers himself one of the best-kept secrets in comics. A writer who enjoys plotting vast, international conspiracies and imbuing his characters with complex psychological profiles, Hudnall is still something of a mystery to comics fans. Despite his work for Eclipse's *Espers*, DC's *Lex Luthor: The Unauthorized Biography*, *Interface* for Epic, and Marvel's *Strikeforce: Morituri* and *Alpha Flight*, he still hasn't broken through to the big time.

Hudnall hopes all that will change with *The Psycho*, his three-issue Prestige Format DC mini-series. Fully-painted by Daniel Brereton, the book features secret agents, superhumans and enough plot reversals to power a Robert Ludlum novel.

According to the writer, *The Psycho* is set well outside the DC Universe. "It takes place in an alternate world where history is changed because, during World War II, the American government invented a drug that turned people into superhumans. The first subject killed Adolph Hitler in 1940, so the war ended quickly, and the European economies weren't bankrupted by it."

Because the atomic bomb was also never invented, governments rely on super-humans to serve as their secret weapons. In this world, there are no superheroes *per se*, just FCOs—Freelance Costumed Operatives, a.k.a. "Psychos."

With the balance of power shifted so drastically, world politics differ radically from what we in the real world are accustomed to.

"Many European countries still have their colonies," Hudnall says. "They keep them by using FCOs to kill off their enemies. Fidel Castro got bumped off, so Cuba is still a 'democracy.' The Middle East is still pretty much under British control, and the French have North Africa."

The mini-series' narrative focuses on CIA agent Jake Reilly, whom the author describes as "just a normal guy who isn't happy with his lot." Something happens in South America that gets him into trouble with his bosses, and they reassign him to SIN (Super Intelligence Network), an organization set up to monitor the super-humans' activities.

Reilly is sent to spy on a foreign country that gives tax-free citizenship to FCOs, making that nation an important player in global politics, as if it had nuclear weapons in our world. Somehow, Reilly's cover is blown, and superhuman assassins called the Nighthunters set out to kill him.

Reilly escapes, but he's forced to leave his girl friend behind.

To save her, he can't return as a normal person, so he runs the risk of taking XDL, the drug that creates superhumans. As his creator puts it, "To survive, Reilly becomes the very thing he hates, an FCO."

What's so bad about this wonder drug? The effects of XDL vary unpredictably from individual to individual, so a dose might kill you, drive you insane or bestow super-powers upon you. If you *do* become superhuman, that's still no guarantee you won't lose your mind later.

"In Reilly's case," notes Hudnall, "you're not sure whether he's sane or not. He's *definitely* unbalanced after going through the process."

That's the downside of XDL treatment; Reilly also ends up with a variety of useful powers. "He's stronger, faster, can breathe underwater, hear radio waves in his head if he wants, see into the infrared." But, adds the scribe, "He relies more on his wits and his sick sense of humor to get through things."

According to Hudnall, *The Psycho* has been in the works for more than three years. *Espers*, another comic filled with psychic powers, espionage and double-crosses, caught the eye of editor Mike Carlin, who asked him to script a project for DC. Hudnall originally planned to write a thriller starring Wildcat, but when told that he was free to create his own characters, he built an alternate world from scratch.

Finding an artist suitable for *Psycho* proved a fairly simple task. Hudnall met Dan Brereton at Wondercon in Oakland, while the painter was working on *The Black Terror* for Eclipse.

"I took one look at [Brereton's] color xeroxes and said, 'Yeah, I want to do something with you,'" he recalls. "I sent his stuff to DC and they immediately liked it.

"Dan is full of ideas," Hudnall

All Psycho Characters & Art Copyright 1991 James D. Hudnall & Daniel Brereton

"*The Psycho* is a very untraditional superhero comic, not like *anything* I've ever seen," says writer James Hudnall.

All Psycho Art Dan Brereton©unless otherwise noted DC Comics

***The Psycho* introduces readers to several strange creatures, including one that may have walked out of a Black Lagoon.**

Joining SIN will force Jake Reilly to become more than "just a normal guy who isn't happy with his lot," notes Hudnall.

In James Hudnall's world, there are no superheroes, only Psychos.

adds, "and he wants a great deal of input on the project's visual end. He stays fairly close to my script, but diverges now and then. It's a very synergistic creative pairing."

One aspect of the book that went through numerous changes was Jake Reilly's appearance after he becomes the Psycho. Hudnall first suggested having him wear a kind of mirrored faceplate, reflecting his surroundings, but he and Brereton eventually decided the effect would be too distancing for readers, who would be unable to read Reilly's expressions. They also played around with the idea of having a hologram focused above Reilly's shoulders, giving him an infinite number of identities.

Finally, Brereton sketched a scary, demented-looking drunk in a baseball cap. That suddenly seemed to be the look they were after. From that image, the Psycho evolved into an imposing figure with red contact lenses, a big black overcoat, a ponytail and a frightening, inhuman mask.

Although he acknowledges similarities between *The Psycho* and such titles as *Marshall Law* and *Watchmen*, Hudnall insists that the mini-series is a big step in a new direction.

"It's a very untraditional superhero comic, not like anything I've ever seen. I'm really close to it, so it's hard for me to be totally objective, but I think people will be taken by surprise when they read it."

Hudnall also has plenty of other work to keep him occupied. He has just finished a one-shot Batman story for *Legends of the Dark Knight*, illustrated by Brent Anderson. Another Prestige Format mini-series, *Streets*, a noirish mystery thriller, is in the works.

Epic will publish the graphic novel *Sinking*, a fictional autobiography of a schizophrenic, with art by Rob Ortaleza. Hudnall hopes *Sinking* will be the first in a series of graphic novels exploring psychological disorders.

Hudnall broke into comics after a stint in the Air Force and 10 years as a computer software consultant. While serving as marketing manager for Eclipse Comics, he submitted a proposal for the book that became *Espers*.

Computer programming and systems analysis also proved to be useful in his new career. "They gave me an ability to think in a structured manner," he explains, "which helps me handle complex plotting. I like to write stories that are deceptively simple. For example, *Lex Luthor: The Unauthorized Biography* was very complex in terms of structure, but it

Hudnall Photo: Brent Anderson

The writer likes exploring characters' minds in comics because "it's such a rich area, undiscovered territory."

seems very transparent when you read it. *Interface* is the same way."

A fan of Japanese Manga since 1981, he encouraged Eclipse's editors to publish some in translation. Working in conjunction with Viz Comics, Eclipse introduced *Mai, the Psychic Girl* (soon to be a film directed by Tim Burton), *Area 88* and other titles to Western readers. Hudnall tried his hand at rewriting the dialogue, making it sound natural to American ears. He continues to do rewrites on *The Professional: Golgo 13*, *Gunhed*, *Silent Moebius* and others.

In turn, Manga taught the writer a trick or two. "They had quite an influence on my work," he says. "I appreciate their visual style and their ability to tell a story with a minimum of copy and dialogue. You can see a strong cinematic approach in my work, thanks to Japanese comics."

When Hudnall made the move to Marvel in 1987 and began scripting *Strikeforce: Morituri* and *Alpha Flight*, he tried to put his own spin on the tried-and-true conventions of mutant mayhem. His vision of what comics can do, however, didn't always mesh with those of his editors and collaborators.

"In the case of *Strikeforce: Morituri*, I took it in a more cyberpunk direction. The book was about people who gain superpowers to fight invading aliens, but their powers will kill them within a year. I got rid of that angle, because it made it difficult for readers to get interested in the characters. I also hate the idea of alien invasions. I find that to be one of the worst clichés.

"The editors wanted me to take [*Alpha Flight*] in a more horror-oriented direction, something like Alan Moore's *Swamp Thing*," he continues. "I didn't see how that would work. You can't have effective horror and people running around with superpowers. So, I just added an edge to the book that it didn't have before and fleshed out the characters more."

Hudnall admits his writing may have been a little too introspective and subtle for a mass-market book like *Alpha Flight*. "I tried to get away from the straight-out action, but that's not what Marvel's all about. They like non-stop events, things happening on every page and in every panel. So, *Alpha Flight* didn't really work for me or for them. But, that's OK; it was an interesting experience."

The fact that both books' artists weren't always in tune with the scribe's ideas didn't help the situation. "Their particular approach to comics and mine were totally different. I'm more interested in breaking new ground, not doing what everyone else has done before. Both books were well-received by some readers, but they really didn't come out the way I wanted them to."

To save his girl friend, "Reilly becomes the very thing he hates, an FCO."

The writer's fascination with psychology appears to be more welcome over at DC. For example, his recent three-part Superman saga, "Red Glass," presented a portrait of the Man of Steel on the verge of a mental breakdown. Under the influence of an alien intelligence, Superman experiences his worst nightmare—losing control over his awesome powers and destroying friends, foes and innocents alike. Although loaded with action, the story makes a statement about Superman's psychological profile.

"I've always been fascinated with people," Hudnall says. "Why they think and act the way they do. Why some people are unable to do the simplest things, while other people accomplish so much. Why some people feel that it's necessary to screw people over, and why others go out of their way to be nice.

"I like exploring characters' minds because it's such a rich area, undiscovered territory. I don't see too many other creators doing it in comics, so I'm out there on my own."

Hudnall doesn't care whether the characters he writers are everyday people or superheroes. He admits that he has only one major criterion.

"I prefer writing intelligent charac-

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Elseworlds

(continued from page 24)

you wrote! Boy!' He's a big Hammer Films fan, and as much as he loves *Sandman*, he says that's very cerebral and kind of talking things, and here, he gets to do this flamboyant Hammer Films stuff, real action and real comic-booky stuff done in superclassy style. And he has really taken off with it.

"Plus, although I plotted it panel-by-panel, I've done it in a plot style rather than a full script, which allows him a certain amount of freedom which he doesn't normally have. I think I put in four full-pagers; through page 35, only one has come up so far, but it's a beauty. This is when Batman first goes down into the sewers and he discovers this stack of dead bodies, fresh victims who haven't come back to life as vampires yet. But then, the oldest dead, which are the ones on the bottom, start coming to life and squirming out. The whole pile shifts, you know? They start climbing out of the bottom, and they attack him! And he gets trapped! It's a big shot of Batman fighting off vampires jumping on him; they're all at his legs and grabbing at him and everything. It's cool stuff, good stuff."

Sometime after the publication of *Master of the Future* and *Red Rain*, notes Denny O'Neil, readers can look forward to "a Batman story set in 1863 in the West, by Elliott Maggin and Alan Weiss. We have one by Howard Chaykin and an artist, whose name is escaping me at the moment, about Batman meeting Harry Houdini; it should be set in the early part of this century. Then, in a somewhat bluer sky area, we have a possible Batman story set in ancient Roman times by Alan Weiss and Mike Nasser. And then, a whole drawerful of proposals that I'm not confident enough about yet to discuss. Everything I've said I'm pretty sure is going to happen, and in fact, a couple of them are fairly far along, but not so far along that I want to promise an on-sale date."

Yet given the peculiar settings the Dark Knight will keep finding himself in in each Elseworlds adventure, it may seem that some of the harsh atmosphere the character has become associated with may be dissipated. "Well, I think these are all pretty damn gritty stories," Denny O'Neil remarks. "If anything, they're, well, not more gritty than what we're doing in the regular books, but equally so. And because they're graphic novels and are meant for an adult audience, they may be even a little *more* hard-edged in places." CS

Currie

(continued from page 52)

Steele [STARLOG #137], just like Dave Sharpe, was really nice, intelligent and capable—I can't say enough good things about those fellows."

Most of Currie's other films of that period lack the superhero serials' staying power; titles like *Billy the Kid's Gun Justice*, *The Bashful Bachelor* and *Stardust on the Sage* have long since dropped out of Currie's memory. Two exceptions are the pair of horror films in which she co-starred with Bela Lugosi, *The Ape Man* and *Voodoo Man*.

"Bela seemed to enjoy doing that kind of work, or I don't know whether he would have done it," Currie says. "He was a fine actor. But, once you start playing those kinds of roles, I suppose you're stuck with it.

"Also, he definitely had a heavy accent, but for the kind of parts he played, he didn't need to speak perfect English. (Sometimes he didn't need to *speak*!) But he was an interesting man and certainly did a brilliant job on *The Ape Man*. He took it so seriously; he really wanted it to be believable, and I think it definitely was. His wife was around, too, and she was a very lovely, educated lady. It all seemed so strange; they had such a wonderful marriage and home life, and here he was portraying mad scientists, voodoo men and apes!"

Monogram's *The Ape Man* starred Lugosi as Dr. James Brewster, a famous gland expert whose decision to inject himself with an ape's spinal fluid has had devastating consequences. Brewster is now covered with hair, walks like an ape and occasionally has the beast's killer instincts. Lugosi fans hold the film in contempt; for the more open-minded, it's a camp classic.

Currie, who co-stars as a newspaper photographer caught up in the mystery, made an unfortunate decision in taking her young son to see the finished film. "After *The Ape Man* was finished, I went to see a preview and took my son with me. He told me years later that it scared him so much! He was six or seven when he saw *The Ape Man*, and for many years, he had dreams of the ape capturing his mother! Of course, I couldn't imagine that he would have that kind of reaction—I was right there *with* him as he was watching it, so obviously, the ape didn't 'get' me. But he vividly remembered the ape chasing his mother, and it left him with terrible dreams that had him waking up screaming for years."

Currie had a much smaller part in the actor's last Monogram film, *Voodoo Man* (1944), the story of a mad doctor (Lugosi) and his associates (John Carradine and George Zucco) who resort to black magic to restore life to the doctor's dead wife. Placed in a spell early on by Lugosi, the actress didn't have much of a chance to contribute to the picture.

"What I remember about *Voodoo Man* was walking around out in the woods with my eyes wide open, wandering around in a trance. And poor John Carradine—he played a halfwit in it! And, may I say he played it very *well*. Playing a halfwit is not the easiest thing to do when you're a good actor!"

If Currie had had the chance to pick her own roles, she admits that the horror films and cheap Westerns she has done would *not* have been high on her personal list. "No, that wouldn't have been what I would have had in mind at all!" she says. "I did a film with Kent Taylor called *Second Chance* [1947], and I enjoyed that very much. I was a lady thief and the picture had a *To Catch a Thief* kind of theme. I enjoyed that tremendously, and that would be more or less the type of role that I would enjoy. Then, I did one called *The Crimson Key* [1947] and another called *Backlash* [1947]; I played heavies in those last two. Instead of just 'the sweet young thing,' I liked playing more meaty parts, and those three pictures were more my type."

Within a few more years, however, Currie and her husband, actor John Good, decided to leave the picture business, seguing into secondary careers as an interior decorator and an architectural designer respectively.

Although now retired from the picture industry, Louise Currie seldom goes for long without hearing from fans who've never forgotten her.

"Apparently, people have decided that *Captain Marvel* is one of the best serials ever made. I'm very, very surprised, and, needless to say, I'm delighted, that out of all the countless serials that were made, not one, but *both* of mine, have happened to come out on video. That has also made it awfully easy for me to give gifts," she jokes.

"I'm just so happy that people are still enthused, that they still like what they see. After all these many years, you would think that they might have another trend, a desire to see something different. But, all through the years, there has been a definite following for many of the films I was in, and they've never given it up. And many fans have kept up with *me*! Believe me when I tell you, that is one of the most flattering things that can happen to an actress." CS

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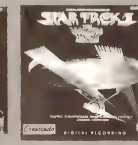

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Johnston

(continued from page 48)

both really psyched to make it as realistic as possible, and I think it shows. The night club scenes were great for me as a director. Again, it was a period thing and I got to control many people. In hindsight, those were probably some of the most difficult scenes, because I had to coordinate many separate movements into one overall scene.

"Even smaller scenes, like the one with Timothy at the code machine, presented challenges. There was the right amount of tension to generate; the build-up to unmasking his true intentions. None of what we did was easy."

Nevertheless, he has had some second thoughts. "If I had a chance to go back and make *The Rocketeer* again, there *are* some things I would do differently," Johnston says. "There's a lot of stuff I would have cut. If I had the chance, I would have gone back and squeezed all the air out of the script. Don't get me wrong; the script as written was fine. It's just that we ended up shooting stuff that ultimately didn't make it into the picture. If we had taken time to trim the script before shooting, we could have saved a lot of time and money."

Johnston is currently weighing several offers that, because of their tenuous nature, he declines to divulge. He is willing to discuss his growing reputation as an FX film director.

"After *Honey* and *The Rocketeer*, I've definitely gotten that reputation, and I know it's going to be a rough one to get out from under. I don't really have a desire to keep making special FX films; I just want to find the best material. If the best material has effects in it that help sell the story, that's great. If the best material *doesn't* have effects, that's great too."

And if the best material turned out to be a *Rocketeer* sequel?

"I'm not a big fan of sequels," he reports. "It's tough to make a sequel as good as the original because an audience comes in with so many expectations. They know *The Rocketeer* characters pretty well already, so a sequel would pretty much have to jump right into the story.

"Who knows? This movie cost a lot of money, and Disney doesn't really want to make movies like this anymore. I'm sure they're going to want to do a sequel, but I'm also sure they'll want to do it for a third less money. From a director's point-of-view, that's going to be tough to do.

"But if I had the right crew and the story was good," Joe Johnston admits, "I might be tempted to give *The Rocketeer* another shot."

Psycho

(continued from page 56)

ters who use their brains. One thing that bugs me about comics in general is that the protagonists and villains are often really stupid. They rely too much on violence to solve problems. Their answer to everything is punching somebody through a wall. I like to come up with creative and interesting ways for characters to handle situations that don't involve the obvious."

In-depth characterization has become an important part of Hudnall's craft. "Over the years," he says, "I've become more concerned with it and with making stories seem more life-like, rather than like something a writer put together. Now, I'm more interested in story and character than I am in plot. Plot really isn't that important in good fiction; it's just a device. But, if I can fuse all three of those elements together seamlessly, that's what I'm striving for.

"The more experienced I've become, the more conscious I am of other writers' techniques and habits," he adds. "I've been a big reader all my life, and you get to the point where you can predict plot twists most of the time. It's the really good stuff where you can't tell where the story is going."

Hudnall recently relocated from the small Northern California town of Sebastopol to Los Angeles. Although he has set his sights on a film career and is ready to enroll in classes at UCLA this fall, he's not about to abandon his comics work.

"I'm seriously dedicated to my craft. The more experience I get, the more fascinated I am by the unconquered vistas out there—especially in this medium, where there's so much to do that hasn't been done before."

He hopes he'll achieve a higher profile in the future. "I've been in the business five years and I'm just now coming into my own, becoming more visible," he says. "The impression I get is that I'm highly regarded and that I have a cult following that keeps growing. *Espers* is considered by many to be a classic. *Interface* is the same way."

Now, with *The Psycho*, James D. Hudnall is ready to make his move towards appealing to a wider audience. "I tend to write not just for comics fans," he says, "but for people who don't normally read comics, like women and adult men. I haven't been trying to cater to the tastes of the market too much.

"I've done well, maintained a decent living," he adds, "but I haven't caught on yet. I haven't had my super-big break. Everyone thinks *The Psycho* will be it, but we'll see."

Ragman

(continued from page 32)

all of the time because it gets boring. It's a big thing to be excited about what you're doing. That's why *Ragman* #8 was such a high point for me. It's rare where you hit a point when you're working on something that becomes so personal that it's a charge to actually be doing it. The eighth issue is far and away the best of the whole series.

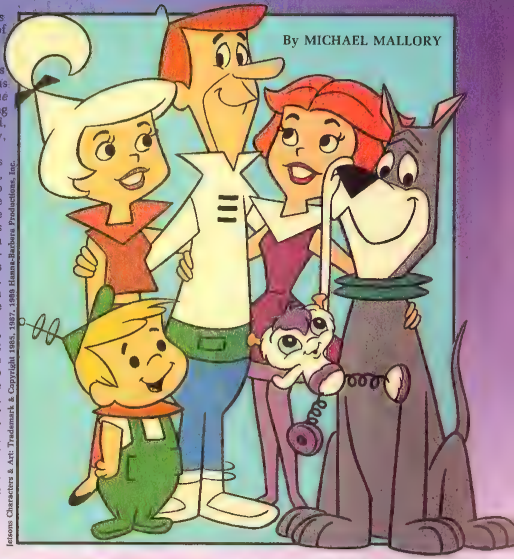
"It's always easy to work with Keith because he's such a good storyteller. He has wonderful ideas and his stories are always logical. For example, in one issue you have the first meeting between the Rabbi and Rory, and they're just sitting around talking for most of the issue. But, there's such a variety of emotions exhibited, and Keith thinks through these things. There's always this kind of tension on each page, so that although all you see are talking heads, it's very easy to dialogue because the faces and body languages each convey a specific emotion which conflict with the other person in the panel. Because [Giffen's] storytelling is so good, when you work with him you're challenged to do something even better. There's that spirit of healthy competition when you're working with a good creator."

There's no way of knowing how the audience will react to this "new" character, but Fleming thinks *Ragman* has all the makings of a hit.

"*Ragman* was ahead of his time, his character is more in line with what's being bought today. It could fail completely, but I have a sense that [today's audience] buys whatever looks dark, violent and menacing, and Ragman in his milieu is certainly that," Fleming says, noting that the character may return if sales warrant it. As for his next project?

"I would prefer to do something completely original," Robert Loren Fleming confesses. "It's always a little regrettable to have to take someone else's ideas and rewrite them. And I'm a friend of Kanigher's, so I would have preferred not to have touched this character and instead done my own. That's not the dynamic of these [comics] companies; these characters are their assets, so this is something the company has invested in and has to exploit, naturally. You wouldn't expect them to throw these characters away any more than you would expect a manufacturing company to throw away scrap iron that they could reuse. It's also very hard to sell original concepts to the companies now; it's much easier to get one of these things through. Hopefully, Ragman will open up other doors."

By MICHAEL MALLORY



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SPACE-AGE TEEN

As Judy Jetson & countless others, Janet Waldo proves to be a woman of a thousand voices.

Teenagers are my *schtick*," says actress Janet Waldo, the voice of America's favorite teen, Judy Jetson. "Teenagers are the easiest thing in the world for me to do. I was using pretty much my own voice as Judy, just a little bit lifted. *That's me* when I get excited," she says, slipping into Judy. "In fact, when I get excited, people very often peg me and say, 'You're Judy Jetson!' "

A versatile performer who has worked in virtually every medium, from stage to TV commercials, Waldo didn't enter the cartoon field until the first *Jetsons* series in 1962. "At the time that *Jetsons* was starting, I was doing a series with Tony Franciosa [*Valentine's Day*]. I had done no cartoons, had never used different voices at all, and didn't know that I could. My agent just sent me out to audition and I read for Judy. Nobody was more surprised than I when I got it!

"It was the first cartoon I ever did, and I thought: This is a good business; I bet I could do some other voices. In those days, they would let you do more than one voice. So, I spoke to Joe Barbera, and he said, 'Make me a tape.' I had my husband write it for me. The first part Joe gave me after *The Jetsons* was the mother-in-law on *The Flintstones*, which was a *far* cry from Judy Jetson."

Janet Waldo's entrance into professional show business was the classic backstage dream: She was spotted in a school play in her native Washington State and brought to Hollywood—by none other than Bing Crosby.

"Bing was from Gonzaga University [in Spokane], and he was there to do a publicity thing," she recalls. "He had seen a play that I was in and decided to bring me and my mother to Hollywood—I was 15. We had some hesitation about it, but we did it."

Waldo appeared with Crosby in one movie, *The Star Maker*. Unfortunately, it wasn't, and after a handful of films, she found her true *métier* in radio.

"Pictures didn't find a spot for me, but radio did," she says. "I got into radio and did great! I was doing five, six, *seven* shows a day. I was in everything."

In radio, Waldo worked with the day's top stars, among them Claudette Colbert, Orson Welles, Bob Hope and Ronald Colman, with whom she played opposite in a production of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. She also began establishing the pattern that would continue throughout her career—play-

Photo: Copyright 1993 Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc.

Says Janet Waldo, the voice of Judy Jetson, "Teenagers are my *schtick*."

The actress thought the original *Jetsons* series was so successful because they were "just a normal family."

husband is playwright Robert E. Lee, whose long list of Broadway credits includes *Inherit the Wind*, *Mame* and *First Monday in October*.) "I like not being gone too many hours at a time. I used to say that I loved working in animation, because I could work between breakfast and lunch and lunch and dinner. After recording, they would would break for lunch, so I would come home, see my husband, fix him lunch, then go back and do another recording. When I was doing the [live-action] series, I would have to leave about 6:30 a.m., and I would get home about 7:00 p.m. It was tough."

Soon, Waldo became one of the busiest and most versatile voiceover actresses in town, and found herself part of an unofficial stock company at Hanna-Barbera, which also included Blanc, VanderPyl, Daws Butler and Don Messick.

"I was with the best, the top people," she recalls. "My inspiration for dong cartoon voices came from Daws, from Mel, from Don, who's a very talented man. Don's sort of an all-purpose voice person; just like a 'voice plumber,' he comes in and fixes it. He does the right voice."

As for VanderPyl, who played both the Jetsons' robotic maid Rosie and, of course, Wilma Flintstone, Waldo says, "I've always adored her. She was wonderful to me when I was quite new at [the business]. When Joe Barbera used to give me other parts to play, Jean would give me a couple of little hints, which was very sweet. And she was no slouch as a voice person; she does wonderful, wonderful voices."

In Mel Blanc, Waldo discovered the odd truism that many of the best comedians are often the most serious people. "Mel didn't fool around," she recalls. "Mel was very serious, hard-working, and he didn't think it was funny if anybody started joking around. He would say, 'Come on, this is business, this is rehearsal, don't fool around.' I loved Mel, but he was harder to know than some of the others. Mel had his own special reserve; I think he just kept to himself a little bit more than most performers.

"Whereas, Daws Butler—my *favorite* in all the world!" she exclaims, her voice rising to Judy-level. "He was the dearest, *dearest* man I've ever known! He took me under his wing early when I was in cartoons. He couldn't resist teaching and helping people; he was a born teacher. I used to have to call him weekly to get my 'Daws fix,' " she laughs.

"It amuses me to realize the auditioning that went on [after Butler's death] to try to get replacements for all his voices," Waldo adds. "Not one person could do *all* of the voices that Daws did. I don't know anyone who didn't really love him. He was an inspiration to me, and he was really why I wanted to be in the cartoon business. I wanted to be just like Daws!"

Waldo also has high praise for her *Jetsons* co-stars, who, like her, were newcomers to the field. "George O'Hanlon [George Jetson, CS #15] was a very sweet man. He never did voices—he did *himself*. In his later years, George was ill and he had many problems with his voice. I felt that Hanna-Barbera should be given a good pat on

ing teenagers. Prior to becoming TV's top teen, she was radio's, in the long-running series, *Meet Corliss Archer*.

"I'm amazed at how many people remember that show!" she says. "I do telephone interviews as Judy Jetson, and there's always a phone call in there saying, 'Didn't you used to do Corliss Archer?' "

The transition from radio acting to animation voiceovers was a natural one for many radio actors, such as Alan Reed, Mel Blanc (STAR-LOG #102) and Jean VanderPyl (CS #19). Waldo made the move somewhat later, but found the medium ideally suited to her talents. She also discovered something else: She loved it.

"Animation was a wonderful career for me, being married to a writer who works at home," the actress says (her

Josie, Josie in Space & Pandora Blake Color Art: Copyright 1970 Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc.

the back, because they wanted very much to keep everybody together, and they used George under great difficulty," Waldo explains.

"And Penny Singleton as Jane Jetson is a delight! She's just an amazing lady. She's very full of vitality and has wonderful zest. Penny had not done voices before. She did herself; she did Blondie, in fact."

The actress thinks a key factor in the success of the original *Jetsons* series was the clever scripting and Joe Barbera's direction. "Joe was a wonderful director. He took a long time—we would have six-hour sessions—but he would not let you get off the mike until he got what he wanted. One of my favorite remarks of his is, 'What else have you got?' He would say it to anybody. Sometimes, he would audition us around the table and say, 'You try this. *You* try it. Can you do that?' Then, he would say, 'What else have you got?' and I loved that, because when he heard it, he bought it."

Once Barbera even found out what else Waldo had by way of Ma Bell! "For Granny Sweets [in *Precious Pup*], Joe called up and auditioned me over the phone. He said, 'I think you can do this; try a little old lady.' I tried it, and he said, 'Well, not so babyish. Now make her *really* old.' I played around with it a little bit, and he said, 'OK, come to the recording session.' Now, *those* were the great days! The other day, I auditioned for a radio commercial—one line—and there were 25 people there. It's disgusting!" she laughs.

As a rule, Barbera worked with the actors while partner Bill Hanna directed the animation, but Waldo recalls one time when Hanna was in the sound booth. It was the recording session for a song to be sung by her and George O'Hanlon, called "Eep-Opp-Ork-Ah-Ah," and the actress almost missed it.

"I got there an hour early because they expected me to be available to do the song before our regular recording session with Joe. I went to the studio, and the girl there said, 'Oh, you're early; nobody's here, and they won't be here for an hour.' I thought, 'Gee, my agent just gave me the wrong time,' so I went shopping. When I came back, Bill had George there, he had everybody there, and he kept rehearsal waiting because I was an hour late! I had the right time, but the *wrong* location; I went to the wrong studio! They were right next door to each other."

Nevertheless, the song's recording went smoothly, and it remains one of the actress' favorite memories of working with O'Hanlon.

Photo: CBS/Courtesy Larry Edmunds Cinema & Theatre Bookshop

Waldo was also radio's favorite teen, as listeners tuned in to *Meet Corliss Archer* with Sam Edwards.

Aside from Judy, the role that remains Janet Waldo's personal favorite is the southern belle race ace Penelope Pitstop, who appeared in both *Wacky Races* and *The Perils of Penelope Pitstop*. "*Penelope Pitstop* was so clever," she says. "In fact, they were the best written of almost any of the series that I did. Today, [the network] might consider it violent, because she's always in peril—you know, there are chainsaws coming—but I *loved Penelope Pitstop*. I wish they would bring it back."

Other personal favorites include the Emmy-winning special *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1966), in which the actress played the animated Princess to a live-action Gene Kelly; *Daniel Boone*, opposite Richard Crenna; and the animated version of *The Addams Family*, as the ghoulish Morticia.

A short sampling of Waldo's credits for Hanna-Barbera also include: *Josie and the Pussycats* and *Josie and the Pussycats in Outer Space* (as Josie), *Shazzan*, *Roman Holidays*, *Around the World in 79 Days*, *The Smurfs*, *Space Kidettes*, *Yogi's First Christmas*, *Abbott and Costello*, and the films

She also went out-of-this-world with *Josie and the Pussycats in Outer Space*.

Jetsons Movie Art: Copyright 1989 Universal Studios Inc. & Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc.

When Waldo learned that Tiffany would replace her as Judy in *Jetsons: The Movie*, she was "terribly disappointed."

Heidi's Song and *Charlotte's Web*. Her work on Ruby-Spears productions includes: *The Trouble With Miss Switch* (as the title character), *Battle of the Planets*, *Puppy's Adventures*, *Alvin and the Chipmunks* and *Thundarr the Barbarian*.

Even the actress herself isn't exactly sure how many shows she has done. "You know how I get those lists?" she asks. "From fans who write and say, 'I loved you in...' and then give you a list. I save those letters. I'm always amazed by a performer who says, 'I do 110 voices!' I can never figure that out. What do they do—sit down and count? When you're doing series and guest spots, who remembers *what* you did?"

Somehow, in the midst of all that work, Waldo found time to raise two children, a son and daughter.

When the *Jetsons* were revived after a 23-year hiatus in 1985, Waldo was delighted, but things weren't quite the same. "You know, the early Jetsons were just a normal family, and I thought that was why they were so successful," she observes. "They were a normal family in outer space, with all of the space problems. We were doing fairly real people. Then, when they revived them, we were told that we had to do everything a little bit *more*. We did, but I don't know why.

"Then, when they tried to bring in some of the fake characters like—you know, Frank Welker did a cute character—but it didn't work. Frank is a fantastic actor, but that didn't go with the concept of *The Jetsons*."

Still, she was happy to be back with Judy and the *Jetsons* cast through the two new series, as well as a few TV specials. Then came *Jetsons: The Movie*.

Le affaire Tiffany is now well known: Janet Waldo recorded the Judy voicetrack, only to be replaced by then-hot teen star Tiffany. "It was hard for me to accept, because it was *my* role, *my* character," Waldo states. "I was just terribly disappointed not to be a part of that cast, because it was all of the original cast.

"I do understand their thinking; they expected Tiffany would appeal to the teenyboppers. But as so many people have told me, they forgot that the baby-boomers were the ones who loved *The Jetsons*."

Now, however, Waldo is able to regard the incident as past history. "I've gotten over my hurt feelings. The only statement I could make is that I'm sorry the picture was a flop in many ways. Hanna-Barbera has been wonderful to me. They continue to hire me, and I continue to enjoy working with them. I hope I always will."

But will the opportunity to play Judy arise again? "Joe Barbera told me that they were going to make more *Jetsons*," she answers, "and he talked about a cute idea, which they may still do, called *Jetsons Juniors*."

The past year or so saw the actress' work schedule cut back somewhat, allowing her to spend more time with her husband, who was recovering from major surgery. But while taking it easy, Waldo still remains busier than most actors. There are more cartoons, the upcoming feature *The Endangered*, radio and TV commercials, and personal appearances. Recently, Waldo has become involved in a new form of voiceover work: Replacing PG-plus dialogue in films for TV airings.

(continued on page 66)

Jetsons Meet Flintstones Art: Copyright 1987 Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc.

Judy and her family looked picture-perfect in *The Jetsons Meet the Flintstones*.

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Davis

(continued from page 37)

it, then they didn't buy it."

Another proposed ride was one that re-created the four seasons of the year. "The idea was, you would go on this train," Davis elaborates. "The first scene would be summer. You would climb a little bit and reach the second room, fall, with trees and animals of that season. Then, you would go into winter, which would be high up in the mountains. You would reduce the temperature so that it would feel cold, and there would be winter animals—beavers in a frozen beaver pond, things of that sort. Then, you would start going downhill to spring, where there would be baby animals, and that would be the finale. All my drawings are out in Florida [at WDI]. I was told that they're considering having a show of all my unused designs some time in September. I must have done several thousand finished drawings on all this stuff."

All told, Davis devised or revised between six and eight attractions that were vetoed by the studio. He believes that the reasons for the rejections had as much to do with management's lack of confidence in their decisions as their fear that the designs would cost too much to sculpt. "If Walt liked something, he would do it," Davis reasons. "With these people, it was a different world."

Davis is still in love with the medium of animation, though he claims to have kept up only "to some degree" with the studio's feature output since *101 Dalmatians*. "I prefer the classic films," he maintains, singling out only *The Jungle Book* for praise. ("There's some wonderful work in it; Milt's scenes featuring the serpent—God, that's wonderful stuff.") He admits to being "a little disappointed" by *The Little Mermaid* because of liberties taken with the Hans Christian Andersen story. "I guess I'm just old-fashioned."

Summing up his thoughts about the man who gave him his start, Marc Davis says, "I remember saying to Walt while I was working on my designs, 'I can do this the cheap way or the expensive way.' He said to me, 'Marc, I don't worry whether anything is cheap or expensive. We only worry if it's good.'

"I don't think there will ever be another Walt Disney; he was one of a kind. If he hadn't come along, I doubt that animation would have achieved the level of perfection that you see today. He saw more in the medium than just Mutt and Jeff and Popeye. He created an art form that is truly American."

Waldo

(continued from page 64)

"I've voiced Sally Field, Natalie Wood, I've even done Aretha Franklin," she says. "In editing, they take out the words that they don't want in the TV version. Sometimes it's a paragraph, sometimes a line, and sometimes I just do the word and they stick it in.

"The other day they called and said, 'Can you get over here quick? We need a teenager to do this looping job.' [The scene] was just two young girls talking together, and the character I dubbed had to say, 'Oh, I just *love* it when you...*touch* me!' I was having fun; I did about four or five lines, just looping. I said, 'This is a cute show, what's the name of it?' And they said, '*Casual Sex.*' "

One venture that has her excited is "California Artists Radio Theatre," a group that has brought back radio drama. A recent production was Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, in which the actress played the role of Olivia.

"I always love to get an acting role," she says. "Cartoons are fun and gratifying; it's great to show your versatility, do all sorts of kooky sounds and go crazy. But having a really good chance to do an acting role, that's the most satisfying."

It's this dedication that Janet Waldo brings to all her roles, no matter what the voice. "I've tried to bring to the characters I portray honesty, truth and innocence in some cases. Even if it's crazy, I like to feel that it's real, honest and original.

"Angela Lansbury once said: 'I need a very large character to hide behind.' This is the wonderful thing about cartoons, especially if you're doing a very large character. You hide behind it, and you can become this weird person. It's just great fun!"

Burden

(continued from page 17)

I guess," Burden quips. "I'm waiting for Godot. You're talking to somebody who's seen Hollywood repeatedly ruin comics. I think Hollywood has a grudge match with the comic book medium," he speculates. "It's almost like, 'If it's a comic, let's screw it up!' "

Whether a film happens or not, the absurdist hero may soon be seen as a variety of coming products, but anyone expecting bendable Carrot dolls shouldn't hold his breath. "We're going to do the best we can to give the public stuff they can enjoy and have fun with," Burden promises. "We can have fun merchandising odd and peculiar things. I've got many old toys I bought years ago in wholesale quantities, and I was thinking about putting them together as a Flaming Carrot toy line. It would be limited, old gag stuff like sneeze powder and weird sunglasses."

While readers love *Flaming Carrot*, many complain about the long wait between issues. "You've got to remember, it's only *one* person doing it," Burden argues. "I do everything but the lettering, and it takes a lot of work! I get each issue done as I get it done."

Burden wouldn't mind passing on the writing reins of *Flaming Carrot* one day. "It's just that people don't want to do the kind of writing I do," he laments. "It's long and laborious, with a great deal of work going into every story. It's not like you sit down and write for two or three hours a day.

"In the early days, there were times when I didn't have an ending until I was halfway through the story," he reminisces. "I used to draw as I went along, but lately, I've been writing them before drawing them. It used to be hard to draw them, now it's hard to write them. I'm not running out of ideas, but you do get interested in other stuff."

Still, readers shouldn't worry about putting their nuclear-powered pogo sticks in storage just yet. "I've been writing this character for a long time, and I can go on with him for a long, long time, but I *am* interested in other stuff," Burden stipulates. "The only reason I've stuck with Flaming Carrot so long is that he is an intriguing, fascinating character, and within the framework of *Flaming Carrot Comics*, I can experiment with different things.

"I would like to do more work with other people and write weird stories," he states. "Not especially Flaming Carrot stories. It's my writing that's made the comic popular with a small clique of fans, not the Flaming Carrot himself. Characters are a dime a dozen, I come up with them every day. I want to go in new, offbeat directions." Bob Burden states, "and have *fun* with it."

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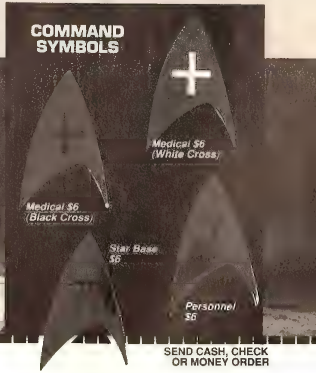

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Spider-Man & X-Men Characters & Art: Copyright 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group

Now that he's finished with terminators, Jim Cameron may take on a certain friendly neighborhood web-slinger while producing some mutant mayhem.

Cameron on Comics

Spider-Man? X-Men? Alien IV? The film has hardly dried on *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, but the reports of director James Cameron turning his attention to various comic book-to-film projects and outer space sequels have already begun circulating. Cameron, addressed the rumors.

"There *is* a possibility that I will be directing *Spider-Man*," says Cameron. "It has been talked about, but there's nothing on paper yet. I will be the producer of *X-Men*. I *won't* direct it, but I will most certainly be involved with the selection of a director and writer."

The film rights to *Spider-Man* and *X-Men* belong to Carolco Pictures, which produced *Total Recall*, *Jacob's Ladder* and *Terminator 2*.

And as for Cameron doing another *ALIEN* film? "I have no interest in directing another *ALIEN* movie," says the director. "At the time I was finishing up *ALIENS*, there was some talk at Fox about me doing another one. I told them that if they could get Ridley Scott to direct *ALIEN III*, then I would do *ALIEN IV*. But they didn't, so I won't."

—*Marc Shapiro*

COMICS screen

All projects are live-action unless specified. Those marked by an asterisk (*) have changed status since last listing. **Not everything listed will ultimately be made.** Abbreviations: S=script; D=director; P=producer; AN=animated; LA=live-action; Syn=syndicated; HB=Hanna-Barbera; WB=Warner Bros.; MWS=Murakami Wolf Swenson; RB=Rankin-Bass; WD=Disney; PP=Paramount; U=Universal. **Attn. all pros:** Info to be added to this list is cheerfully invited. Send to COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Ave. South, 8th Flr., NY, NY 10016. (Info as of 7/5/91)

The Addams Family. Film. D: Barry Sonnenfeld. S: C. Thompson, L. Wilson. Cast: Anjelica Huston, Raul Julia, Chris Lloyd. PP. November.

The Airtight Garage. AN. S: Randy Lofficier.

* **Aladdin.** AN film. WD. '92.

Alias. Film. U. S: David S. Goyer. P: P. Lenkov, S. Daniel.

Alley Oop. Film. Columbia.

The American. Film. P: Joel Silver. S: Mark Verheiden.

American Flagg! Film.

An American Tail: Fievel Goes West. AN Sequel. Nov.

Ant-Man. Film.

Archie. LA Film. S: N. & D. Ephron. D: J. Schumacher. DIC.

* **Baby Huey.** AN short. U. S: Bill Kopp.

Barbarella. TV. Nelvana.

Batman. Sequel. S: Dan Waters. D: Tim Burton. Cast: Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito, Annette Bening. WB. Summer '92. AN series. '92 on FBC.

* **Beauty & the Beast.** AN film. WD. Out Thanksgiving.

Beetle Bailey. Film.

Beetlejuice. AN series. ABC, video & FBC. Film sequel.

Blackhawk. Film. Amblin. S: Dan Aykroyd.

Blackman. Film.

Blade. Film. S: Lee Goldberg & William Rabkin.

Blinky Bill. Australian AN film. P: Yoram Gross. '92.

Blondie. Film musical. WD. S: Alfred Uhry. P: Francine LeFrak, Dean Young.

James Bond. Syn AN series, *Adventures of James Bond Jr.* MWS. Fall '91.

Betty Boop. Film. D: R. Fleischer

Bonkers D. Bobcat. Syn AN series. WD. '92.

* **Brenda Starr.** Film. Triumph to release it theatrically this month in several cities.

Bucky O'Hare. Syn AN. P: Sunbow, IDDH, Claster TV.

Bugs Bunny. *Taz-Mania* & *Elmyra's Family* spin-offs.

* **Bullwinkle.** Characters join Universal Studio Tour attractions soon. *Boris & Natasha.* Still delayed.

* **Capitol Critters.** AN series. Steven Bochco Prod. ABC. Mid-season bow.

Captain America. Film.

Captain Planet. AN series.
* **Casper.** Film. Amblin.
Cats. AN. Amblin. '93.
Charlie Chan. Film. Chan: B.D. Wong. D: Fred Levinson. P: G. Kirkwood, J. Hyde.
Chicken Man. AN spoof series. Calico.
City of Darkness. Film. S: Patrick Cirillo & Joe Gayton. P: M. Douglas, R. Bieber. Col.
* **Cobalt 60.** AN Film.
Conan. Film sequel. S: Charles Edward Pogue.
* **Cool World.** AN/LA film. PP. D: Ralph Bakshi. Bows '92.
Danger Squad. Film. P/D: Leo Fong. W/D: P.R. Cable.
Darkwing Duck. AN Syn & ABC series. WD. Bows Sept.
Deathlok. Film.
* **Defenders of Dynatron City.** AN half-hour special. Possible series. LucasArts.
* **Dennis the Menace.** Film.
Dinosaurs for Hire. Film. S: Richard Finney & James Bonny. Fox. FX: Henson C Shop.
Dr. Strange. Film. Zoetrope. D: Alex Cox. P: F. Coppola.
Doug. AN series. Nickelodeon. Bows August.
Dreamwalker. CBS TV film.
* **Dudley Do-Right.** Film. PP.
Elfquest. Film/TV. Abby Lou Prod, Freedom Distrib.
Evangeline. Film. Funnybook Films.
* **Family Dog.** AN series. CBS. P: S. Spielberg, Tim Burton, D. Klein. Mid-season bow.
Fantastic Four. Film. Neue Constantin. P: Bernd Eichinger.
Far Side. AN TV.
Fearless Fosdick. LA & AN TV projects. Nelvana.
Felix the Cat. AN film.
* **Fish Police.** AN series. HB. CBS. Mid-season. S: Jeanne Romano.
* **The Flash.** CBS TV series cancelled.
* **The Flintstones.** Film. Fred: John Goodman. D: Richard Donner. U/Amblin. AN TV film. S: J. Romano.
Garfield. AN series.
Goofy. Syn AN series *Goof Troop*. WD. Bows '93.
The Green Arrow. TV.
The Green Hornet. Film. S: D. Mancini. P: D. Kirschner. U.
Grimjack. Film.
Gumby. Film.
Hopalong Cassidy. Film. S: G. Popper, J. Rosenthal. Alligator Prods.
* **Human Target.** Series. ABC. Mid-season bow. Cast: Rick Springfield, Clarence Clemons. P: Danny Bilson, Paul De Meo, Lawrence Lyttle.
Inspector Gadget. LA TV series. DIC. Family Channel.
Iron Man. Film. D: Stuart Gordon. U.
The Jetsons. LA film. U.
Jo Jo. Film. P: Lee Caplin. S: Mike Chapman.
Jonny Quest. Film. U.

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New Toons check in—but will they check out?—for a stay in *Taz-Mania*. That semi-inarticulate, hairy superstar Tasmanian Devil is the headliner.

* **Judge Dredd.** Film. Fox. S: H. Chaykin & J. Moore. P: C. Lippincott. For '93.
Kaanga. Film. S: (D) Geoff Edwards, S. Bernard. P: L. Caplin, B. Edwards, T. Adams.
Li'l Abner. TV. P: Max & Micheline Keller.
Little Mermaid. AN prequel TV series. For '92. WD.
Little Nemo. AN film. TMS Ent. Songs: Sherman Bros.
Lone Wolf & Cub. Film. D: John Bruno. P: Ed Pressman. S: Bill Wisher.
Lucky Luke. TV series. Terence Hill, star. Silvio Berlusconi Comm.
Mai the Psychic Girl. Film. D: Tim Burton. S: L. Wilson. C. Thompson. P: Burton, Wilson, Denise Di Novi, Walter Hill. Carolco. "Movie musical."
Mandrake. Film.
Mr. A. Video.
Mr. Magoo. Film. P: S. Tisch. AN/LA.
Mr. X. Film. P: Jim Cash & Jack Epps Jr.
Monster in My Pocket. AN series/LA film. Pacific Rights.
Mother Goose & Grimm. AN series. CBS. Film Roman, Lee Mendelson Prod. Fall '91.
My Secret Identity. Sitcom.
Nancy. Film. P: P. Muller.
Negative Man. Bob Kane hero. LA series. Nelvana.
Neil the Horse. AN/LA.
Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD. Film. S: Greg Pruss.
Joe Palooka. Musical.
The Phantom. Film. P: B. Sherlock. P. Sjoquist, J. Torv, R. Price. S: Ken Shadie. Lee

Tarzan Photo: Courtesy Rachel McCallister & Associates

He's Tarzan, she's Jane as the latest apeman takes to the TV screen in September. Wolf Larson is the new jungle hero. Lydie Denier plays Jane Porter. This half-hour syndicated *Tarzan* premieres circa September 28.

Falk, con. D: Simon Wincer.

Pico & Columbus. AN film. Bavaria Film.

Pirates of Dark Water. AN series. ABC. HB. Bows fall.

Power Pack. TV pilot. S: Jason Brett. New World & Paragon Ent.

Plastic Man. Film. WB/Amblin.

Prince Valiant. AN series. Family Channel.

The Prowler. Film. Funnybook Films.

The Punisher. Sequel.

Radio Boy. AN. RB.

Reid Fleming. Film. S: creator David Boswell. P: M. Weisman, J. Loeb II.

Ren & Stimpy Show. AN series. P/D: John Kricfalusi. Nickelodeon.

* **Richie Rich.** Film. P: J. Silver, J. Davis. S: Neil Tolkin.

RoboCop 3. S: Frank Miller & Fred Dekker (D). For '92.

The Rocketeer. Film. Out.

Roger Rabbit. Prequel film. *Who Discovered Roger Rabbit.* D: Rob Minkoff. New short "Hare in My Soup."

Rogue Trooper. Film.

Rugrats. AN series. Nickelodeon. Klasky Group.

* **The Saint.** Film. S: Terry Hayes. D: Renny Harlin. P: Robert Evans. PP.

Scooby Doo. Film. WB.

Secret Agent X-9. AN film.

Sgt. Preston. TV revival.

Sgt. Rock. Film. P: Joel Silver, Bob Zemeckis. WB.

The Shadow. Film. S: David Koepp. P: Martin Bregman. U.

The She-Hulk. Film. S/D: Larry Cohen. B. Nielsen.

The Silver Surfer. Film.

The Simpsons. AN. FBC.

Speed Racer. Film. S: Peter Lenkov. P: J. Silver. WB.

Spider-Man. Stage musical. S & lyrics: B. Harman. Music: K. Herrmann. EXP: Stan Lee, D: J. Nash, J. Calamari.

Starwatcher. Film. Computer AN. P: Alain Guiot/Videosystem. S: Moebius (D) & J. Fryzman.

Sub-Mariner. Film.

Superboy. Syn TV.

* **Super-Dave.** AN version of LA series. DIC.

Superman. *Superman: The New Movie.* S: Mark Jones & Cary Bates. To lense FL.

* **Super Mario Bros.** LA film. S: Barry Morrow. D: Greg Beeman. W/ Danny DeVito.

* **Swamp Thing.** TV. USA. Renewed for 50 more episodes. AN 5-episode mini-series.

Tales from the Crypt. HBO.

* **Tarzan.** LA series. Tarzan: Wolf Larson. Jane: Lydie Denier. Worldvision. Fall.

* **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** AN series. CBS & Syn. *TMNT II.* On video fall.

Terry & the Pirates. Film. S: J. Feiffer. P: G. Kirkwood, J. Hyde. EXP: S. Weston.

Thor. Film. Stonebridge.

Time Beavers. AN TV series. Kushner-Locke.

Tin-Tin. AN series. Nelvana. Ellipse. HBO fall '91.

Tom & Jerry. AN film. P/D: Phil Roman. AN *Tom & Jerry Kids* airing.

Toxic Crusaders. AN series.

Trouble with Girls. Film. Fox & Funnybook Films. S: Will Jacobs & Gerard Jones. P: M. Pepler, N. Tabachnick.

* **Ultraman.** 13 new half-hour TV episodes. Shot in English.

Valentina. TV series. Dementra Hampton. Reteitalia.

Vampirella. Film. S/D: Jim Wynorski.

V for Vendetta. Film. WB. S: Hilary Henkin.

WARP. Film. S/P: Mark Victor & Michael Grais.

Watchmen. Film. P: J. Silver. D: T. Gilliam.

We're Back. AN film. Amblin London/U. For '92.

Why I Hate Saturn. TV.

Wizard of Id. Film. Cinergi.

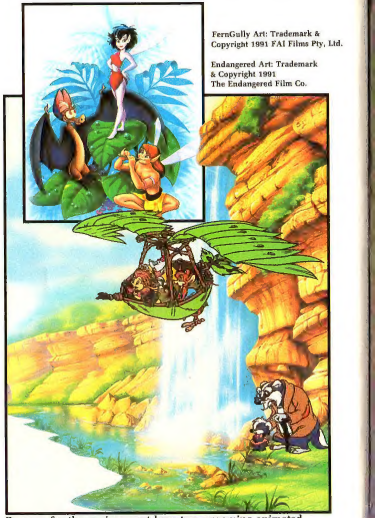
Wolverine. Film.

The X-Men. Film. Carolco. P: Jim Cameron. AN 5-ep mini-series. FBC. Marvel P.

* **Yogi Bear.** *Yo! Yogi.* AN TV series. HB. NBC. Fall '91.

Zen. Film. AN series.

* **Zorro.** Film. D: Steven Spielberg. S: Nancy Larson. Tri-Star. TV series. Family Channel.



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Concern for the environment keys two upcoming animated releases: *FernGully, the Last Rainforest* (where fairies and bats team up to save their natural world) and *The Endangered* (in which a mouse, a mole and a hedgehog unite to salvage their forest home from a chemical spill).

She-Hulk Photo: Copyright 1993 New World International
She-Hulk: Trademark & Copyright 1991 Marvel Entertainment Group

She's savage. And yes, she's She-Hulk. Brigitte (*Red Sonja*) Nielsen goes semi-green in this promotional photo for the not-yet-shot movie.

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